Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Aspects of Indian Music

Edited by

Sumati Mutatkar

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The 14 essays comprising this book offer an account of the prominent facets of the music of India. They set out the basic concepts of raga and tala, explain particular song-forms, describe the conservation and teaching of music through the guru-shisya parampara. Besides, they also discuss the raga-time association, ragamala paintings, and Rabindra-sangeet—the songs of Rabindranath Tagore.

This wide-ranging survey of Indian music would be of interest to general readers and listeners inquiring into the subject, as well as specialists in music inquiring into specific topics.

Cover painting: Raja Ravi Verma
Cover design : B.K.Singh

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Aspects of Indian Music

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Aspects of Indian Music

Edited by
SUMATI MUTATKAR

SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI

HOPE INDIA PUBLICATIONS

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

© Sangeet Natak Akademi | 2006

First Edition 1961
Reprint 2006

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, electronic or mechanical, without permission from the Akademi and publishers.

Published in India by
SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI
Rabindra Bhavan, Feroze Shah Road,
New Delhi
Tel (011) 23387246, Fax (011) 23382659
E-mail: sangeetnatak@bol.net.in

HOPE INDIA PUBLICATIONS
85, Sector 23, Gurgaon – 122017
Tel (0124) 2367308
E-mail : info@hopeindiapublications.com
www.hopeindiapublications.com

ISBN 81 - 7871 - 096 -X

Printed in India by
Nagri Printers, Shahadra, Delhi

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

FOREWORD

The fourteen essays that constitute this book were originally commissioned in the mid-1980s at the instance of Dr. Narayana Menon, the then Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, on the occasion of one of the first Festivals of India in Europe. Subsequently, these were published by the Sangeet Natak Akademi under the editorship of Prof. Sumati Mutatkar (1987). The work of well-known writers in the field of music, the collection provides the general reader with a wide view of music in northern and southern India.

The book has been out of print for some time, though it has remained in constant demand. It is therefore re-issued in an attractive new cover, but with all its content intact. I am sure readers will welcome back the publication as they greeted it when it first appeared.

Rabindra Bhavan,
Feroze Shah Road,
New Dehli
January 15, 2006

Jayant Kastuar
Secretary
Sangeet Natak Akademi

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

PREFACE

A collection of essays by diverse hands, *Aspects of Indian Music* offers accounts of the prominent facets of the music of India.

Contributions to the book are chiefly of three kinds; though not separated in sections, they roughly follow the order described here. Writings of the first variety set out the basic concepts of raga and tala. Those of the second explain particular song-forms—dhrupada, khayal and thumri. To the third belong articles on the teaching and conservation of music through the guru-shishya system and the gharanas. There are besides articles that share the nature of all three varieties, such as the synoptic survey of Carnatic music—taking in its history, song-forms, instruments. In addition, there are essays on the raga-time association, ragamala paintings, and Rabindrasangeet—the songs of Tagore. These several writings are placed in a wider cultural context by 'Music Culture of Peoples', the first paper in the volume; read at the International Music Congress more than a decade ago, it still has astute perceptions to convey on India's music culture *vis-à-vis* the West's.

Contributions to *Aspects of Indian Music* are mainly expository, and this is in keeping with the intent of the book. Even so, opinion is inevitable in matters aesthetic and historical. Such opinions, where they occur in the book, belong to the writers in question.

Also to be admitted is the overlap inevitable in a book of kind, but this has its own advantages. For instance, definitions or interpretations of raga and tala, the building blocks of Indian music, are essayed by most of the contributors here; and this recurrence, by virtue of emphasis peculiar to each writer, only enhances the enquirer's comprehension of these musical phenomena.

Indian music is a vast and many-splendoured thing. Should the present volume promote in some small measure a discerning interest in the musical heritage of India, it will have served its purpose.

SUMATI MUTATKAR

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CONTENTS

V Foreword

VI Preface

1 Music Culture of Peoples:Tradition and Contemporaneity in Developing Countries

9 The Concept of the Rāga in Carnātic Music
S. RAMANATHAN

13 The Concept of the Rāga in Hindustāni Music
M. R. GAUTAM

18 Rāga and Tāla: A Western View
LYON LEIFER

29 Karnātaka Music: A Synoptic Survey
R. SATHYANARAYANA

76 Dhrupada: Its Legacy and Dynamics
SUMATI MUTATKAR

84 The Khayāl
SUSHEELA MISRA

90 The Tradition of Thumri
RITA GANGULY

96 Composition and Improvisation in Indian Music
BHASKAR CHANDAVARKAR

103 The Guru-Shishya Relationship in the Learning of Music in India
NARAYANA MENON

106 Gharānās in Hindustāni Vocal Music
VIJAY KICHLU

113 An Enquiry into the Raga-Time Association
MUKUND LATH

120 An Art-Historian on Rāgamāla Paintings: Music Transformed into Image
GEETI SEN

127 Rabindrasangeet: Song Compositions of Rabindranāth Tagore
LOKENATH BHATTACHARYA

133 Index

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Music Culture of Peoples: Tradition and Contemporaneity in Developing Countries*

The phrase 'developing countries' has many connotations. But I presume that I am to deal with the music cultures and problems of countries from Turkey to Korea, not to mention the many independent and developing states of the great continents of Africa and of Latin America. These include several major musical traditions with their own ancient and sophisticated concepts of theory and practice. I must confess straightaway that I am not competent to deal even with a fraction of these. I shall, therefore, confine my remarks to the music of India and deal with other areas only in passing. Incidentally, India and Pakistan which share the same musical tradition have a combined population equal to that of Europe and the United States put together. So it will not be a small minority culture that I shall be dealing with. Many of our problems have much in common with the problems of other developing countries.

The last twenty-five years have seen the emergence of several new and dynamic independent nations in Asia and Africa. Along with independence came also a greater pride in the dormant traditions and achievements in the field of music and the arts. It is not as if these countries came of age culturally overnight. What has actually happened is that Europe and America which used to look down on these cultures as primitive and relegate them to the field of 'ethnomusicology' began to realize that these cultures are not just exotic curiosities for anthropologists, to be studied as something apart from the mainstream of music, but that they are, in fact, an integral part of the mainstream of world music, often the deepest and the least ruffled.

This realization has been helped by the tremendous and rapid developments in communication — not merely the ease and facility of travel from one part of the world to the other, but the availability over radio and television, and through the phonograph and the tape recorder, of the musical heritage of areas far apart from one another. As far as music is concerned, the map of the world is being redrawn and a tremendous revolution is in the offing, a revolution the signficance of which has not yet been fully realized. Look at some of the extraordinary things happening around us today: Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan teaching Indian music at American universities; American, Japanese, Russian students studying music in India; Japanese composers writing electronic music; Alan Hovahness writing a suite based on an Indian novel; Peggy Glanville-Hicks writing an opera on an Indian theme; Benjamin Britten creating a work reminiscent of the Noh plays of Japan; Russian composers like Balasanian writing music for ballets

*Paper read at the opening session of the VII International Music Congress held in Moscow 6–9 October, 1971.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

based on Kālidāsa's works; Maurice Bejart travelling in India for inspiration for his ballets; Yehudi Menuhin playing Indian *rāgas* accompanied by Allā Rākhā on the *tablā*. These things would have been unthinkable even twenty-five years ago.

Suddenly we are beginning to realize that music and the creation of music are not isolated activities in different parts of the world and at different periods of history; that at various stages of man's growth in different parts of the world, whether it be the ancient Sumerian civilization or Greek or Chinese or Egyptian or Indian, only small segments of this limitless world of sound have been explored and developed within the limits of man's awareness and faculties; that these segments, spread widely over time and space, are closely interrelated; that it is the sum total of all this that makes the world of music the many-splendoured wonder it is.

It is in this perspective that I would like to discuss the problems of the music of developing countries.

'Developing countries' is not altogether a happy phrase. I stated earlier the areas we had in mind when we were dealing with this phrase. I know what it means in political and economic terms. Developing or undeveloped countries are areas of the world which are poor, sometimes illiterate, not advanced industrially or technologically; countries which do not possess supersonic fighting planes, heavy tanks, intercontinental missiles, nuclear weapons. But these areas are not necessarily 'undeveloped' in a musical or cultural sense. Several of them have, in fact, musical cultures far more ancient, and as subtle and sophisticated, as those of the economically and industrially 'developed' countries.

The situation is not a simple one, not merely because of the contradictions inherent in contemporary social life and organization, but also because of the terminology we use. Take my own country, for instance. There are large areas of the country which could be described as medieval or feudal judging by modern contrivances and ways of living; yet there is a clear-cut understanding of the democratic process, and the percentage of peasants participating in democratic elections is a very high one. Large numbers of my countrymen are illiterate, but wise and politically and socially conscious. They are often described as superstitious and caste-ridden, but are capable of high sophistication in thinking. There are, of course, the more obvious contradictions. You can see primitve agricultural instruments outside atomic reactors and big steel plants; bullock carts side by side with jet planes. A people abjectly poor, yet gentle and happy; traditionally peace-loving, but heroic in war; a people with a multiplicity of religions, languages and ethnic groups, yet welded into a stable secular democracy.

One of our most distinguished Presidents was a philosopher; another was an educationist. Neither had ever campaigned in a political election, thrown mud on political opponents, nor used harsh words about enemies. I am not suggesting— not for a moment— that all is lovely in the garden. What I am saying is that when we use words like 'politician', 'illiterate', 'developing', 'undeveloped', 'education', 'growth', quite often we don't mean the same thing, and we have to be careful. We don't even mean the same thing when we say 'pure melody' or 'harmony', 'ancient' or 'modern'. A 700-year-old instrument like the sitar we consider a comparative newcomer on the musical scene.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Take the word 'ethnomusicology'. In common American, even Western, parlance it stands for the study of all music outside the mainstream of Western music. By the same analogy, a scholar at one of the discussions of the Madras Music Academy used the word 'ethnomusicology' *vis-a-vis* Indian music to mean the study of the music of Europe from Palestrina to Brahms and Wagner. This would appear amusing to most of you here, because our assumptions are so different and we start from different premises. It is difficult for us to see ourselves as others see us.

In the preparation of this paper I was asked to say something about the contribution and the role of non-European countries with their rich folklore and popular heritage and their young culture to music. Contribution to European music? An impetus, a stimulant, to creative activity for European composers? Or, contribution to the world of music? Or to human happiness? All non-European musical cultures are not cultures of folklore. India or Pakistan or Japan has its own art music distinct from its folk music – just as distinct as the music of Bach or Beethoven is from the folk music of Germany. Their culture is not young or developing, but often old and developed.

If I posed a similar question as a non-European – What is the contribution of European countries to the world of music today? – it would appear in a gathering like this somewhat embarrassing. So let me answer the question seriously and in the most meaningful way.

Our music is the expression of our consciousness, a measure of our fulfilment as human beings. And it reflects and expresses our most deep-felt emotions, our hopes and aspirations in an idiom that is a product of our environment, a language that has been developed and refined over many many years of growth and struggle. It is a part of our life and thought, and it has to be understood and appreciated and criticized in the perspective of our life and thought and philosophy. It has played a significant role in our fulfilment as human beings and in the integration of human relationships.

Its roots go back some six thousand years. Possibly more, but I am limiting myself to recorded facts and history. The earliest system of music we know of is the Sumerian. Even six thousand years ago it was perhaps the crest, the most advanced state of ideas inherited from an even earlier pre-historic time. Music was an essential part of the orderly and ritualistic way of life of Sumeria, the monumental temples echoing with words and music, voices and instruments. The Sumerian temple ritual seems to have been a most highly organized system of music of which we have fairly accurate and documented accounts.

Something of its glory and achievement overflowed into neighbouring areas – to Egypt with its own high civilization dating back to the fourth millennium B.C., to India, to Greece.

India lies a little farther away, but its gateway in the north-west has been wide open to successive waves of the ebb and flow of these civilisations for some six thousand years. Harappā in the Punjab and Mohen-jo-dāro in Sind bear eloquent testimony to this.

India both took and gave generously. From West Asia, from the earliest times of known history, right up to this day, India accepted, learnt and assimilated theories, practices, instruments, even nomenclature and conventions. And, in turn, she passed

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

this on to the East – to Laos and Cambodia, to Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam.

As a well-known scholar has put it: "The successive waves of peoples who have flowed into this subcontinent over some six thousand years... each bringing their own music with them, have made India a vast compound of musical lore into which its age-long tradition of classical music has frequently and abundantly dipped." But however numerous these influences, Indian music kept its identity. I am reminded of the famous words of Gandhiji who once said: "I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible, but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them".

There is much that is common to the systems of music from the Arab-speaking countries and Iran to Vietnam and Indonesia – the preeminence of vocal music, the subtle rhythmic instruments and their important roles in every context, the nature of the melodic line, the significance of improvisation, the close relationship between music, the dance and the related arts. What is true of India is certainly true of Pakistan, Ceylon, Afghanisatn, Nepal, Sikkim. Concepts and attitudes are common to even more distant areas.

What are these concepts? Let me give you one example.

There is the story of a king who asked a sage to teach him how to make sculptures of the gods. The sage replied: "If you do not know the laws of painting you can never understand the laws of sculpture". "Then", said the King, "be so kind as to teach me the laws of painting". The sage said: "It is difficult to understand the laws of painting without understanding the technique of dancing". "Please then instruct me in the art of dancing" said the king. "This is difficult if you do not study instrumental music" said the sage. "Please teach me the principles of instrumental music." "But", said the sage, "these cannot be learnt without a deep understanding of the art of vocal music." The king bowed in acceptance. "If vocal music is the source and goal of all the arts, please then reveal to me the laws of vocal music."

Even long before the Christian era Indian music had developed not only definite laws of theory and practice, but even comprehensive theories of appreciation. Ancient Indian texts describe music as a type of activity, a statement governed by a *rasa. Rasa* means flavour, that which gives character to a work of art and determines its quality. The ancient scholars studied carefully the physical stimulants to aesthetic enjoyment. They analyzed the nature of emotion; the conditions and the themes which produce the emotions; the visible signs and results of such emotion; and even the nature of the subconscious mind, the involuntary emotions. Their methods were rational and, what is more, they put their conclusions to good practical use. The Greeks did this on a small scale. They realized, for instance, that the Doric mode was dignified and manly, and taught the Spartan boys nothing else. They were careful of the use of the Lydian mode which they thought voluptuous, licentious and orgiastic. Strabo, the Greek philosopher, may have been thinking of this, among other things, when he acknowledged the debt of Greek music to India.

In the highest conception of art, religion and art are synonymous. This would be in accordance with the rationale of a hieratic society. Music is an instrument in the realization of God. A song is a *yantra,* an apparatus of worship.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Such a serious concept of art would imply theories and standards of criticism and appreciation equally sophisticated. Aesthetic experience is left to the *rasika,* in our case, the listener. The musician simply creates the conditions. This explains why passive listening is almost impossible where Indian music is concerned. Keeping time, quite ostentatiously, at Indian concerts is not considered bad etiquette. The spectacle of a silent immobile audience holding its breath until the last phrase to applaud a fine performance is unknown in traditional Indian music circles where the most cultivated part of the audience often punctuates improvisations with nods of assent and little eulogistic phrases. *Rasāswādana,* the tasting of *rasa,* the appreciation of art, depends on the cultivated sensibility of the listener. Dhananjaya, an early medieval critic, in his *Dasarupa* says: "The *rasika's* own capacity to be delighted is the most important thing."

The history of this music has to be studied and understood not so much in terms of the music itself, but through various treatises which have come down to us. The main landmarks — at least until recent times — were not the great composers or their works, but treatises like the *Nātyashāstra* of Bharata (circa 4th century A.D.), the *Brihaddeshi* of Mātanga (circa 7th century A.D.), the *Sangīta Ratnākara* of Sarangadeva (circa 13th century), the *Swara-mela Kalānidhi* of Rāmāmātya (16th century) or the *Chathurdandi Prakasika* of Venkatamakhi (17th century). These embody extant knowledge and are in the nature of codifications of current theory and practice. There are hundreds of such texts which are authentic and authoritative, and are excellent indices to the development of the art.

In the pattern of this culture, music and the dance, the visual arts and poetry, are all governed by the same attitudes. In all these the insistence is on emotional sincerity rather than intellectual sincerity; on the lyrical impulse rather than the dramatic impulse; on intuition rather than reason; on contemplation rather than action. The result is a subjectivism which is opposed to Western objectivism.

This tradition has to be understood in the context of Indian life and thought. Its present theory and practice are the logical development of a consistent process, a process which has been distinctive and which is an integral part of Indian history and culture. To listen to Indian music and judge it in terms of Western music or some other system will mean missing the point and reaching absurd conclusions. It will be like judging Beethoven or Brahms or Tchaikovsky in terms of *rāga* (the basis of Indian melody) and *tāla* (the basis of Indian rhythm). Questions of style, of interpretation, of finer and subtler points of execution cannot be discussed in any recognizable international terms. Aesthetics and attitudes can. Music is *not* an international language. All this talk of music being an international language is a facile over-simplification. Of course it is true of areas like Europe or southern India or northern India or West Asia — areas which have a common musical system but different spoken languages. But I have heard a great deal of Egyptian, Javanese, Japanese, Persian, Arabic, Indonesian, Chinese music — not to mention the various national styles of Europe — and I doubt if these constitute an international language. And values differ widely.

Take the voice for instance. It is the strangest yet the most expressive and challenging musical instrument in the world, and one that is common to all systems. But

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

the attributes of a voice will be determined by what the voice is expected to do. Only a fully trained Western soprano can sing the aria of the Queen of the Night from *The Magic Flute* and only an Indian musician can do the *Viriboni varna*. Stress on particular values too is important. The quality of the voice as such is comparatively unimporatant in Indian music. In India the voice is no more of an asset to a singer than, say, good handwriting is to a poet. What a musician sings is far more important than *how* he sings. Every singer is a creative artist in the fullest sense of the word. In the West, a singer is a vehicle for the expression of other people's (the composer's) ideas and very often, as in so many operas, a voice is used just like any other instrument. In Europe a young man decides to become a singer if he has a good voice; in India a young man decides to become a singer if he is musical.

The most distinctive characteristic of this music is that it is purely melodic. I mean by pure melody, a melodic line that neither needs nor implies harmony. Harmony affects the structure of melody itself, and it has become almost impossible for the Westerner to conceive of melody without the implications, tacit or explict, of a harmonic system. Indian melody is made up of notes which are related purely by their continuity. If this melody sounds exotic to the Western ear, it is probably because the West has lost the ear for *pure* melody and cannot take in melody neat as it were. Our use of quarter-tones is also relevant here. There is no such thing in Indian music as an exact quarter-tone, such as those used by Alois Haba or Bloch. But we do use in certain *rāgas* sharps which are sharper than the sharps of the diatonic scale and flats which are flatter. Tovey once said that the just intonation of a Wagner opera would need one thousand notes to the scale! It is not the number of notes we use that is important. The important thing is how small an interval is of direct use and interest to us.

Like all melodic traditions, this is basically an oral tradition. Indian musical notation is adequate for purposes of preservation and analysis. But it has not been developed into a complete visual representation of the music for transcription and immediate performances. As Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy has pointed out, "the history of art in India is a history of pupillary succession... The art of music of the present day is a direct descendant of those ancient schools whose traditions have been handed down with comment and expansion in the guilds of the hereditary musician."

A tradition handed down with comment and expansion. This is the basis of traditional music education embodied in the *gurukula* system. The word guru is significant. He was more than a teacher. He was a preceptor. The *shishya* was more a disciple than a pupil. The *shishya* or disciple became an apprentice, as it were, to the teacher, living with him, travelling with him, listening to him continually over long periods, thus slowly imbibing the art. It was common for the *guru*, the teacher, to instruct his disciple in Sanskrit, in *vyākarana*, in history. There was thus, all the time, contact between teacher and disciple, continual communication in fact. It meant not merely the study of music, its theory and practice, but the acceptance of a way of life.

Our problem today is to provide students of music with teachers and teaching methods which will give them the most precious part of the *gurukula* system without its chores; also give them a general education so that a student of music is a developed

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

individual, and a practical and useful member of the community. This means that his musical education will have to be placed in the perspective of a wide education in the humanities without resulting in any dilution of standards.

We have to realize that in Africa, Asia and other 'developing' areas we have millions of children who have fine musical sensibilities. Just as they speak different langauges, so they are brought up in musical environments and musical traditions which are autochthonous. We have to help them develop their natural talent without doing violence to their natural and inborn susceptibilities. Their development should not alienate them from their social environment, nor from their traditional educational framework. I am not suggesting that they should be bottled up or marooned in islands of orthodoxy or primitive narrow concepts. But they should be helped to express themselves happily and freely in their own environment and the assistance should spring from a careful study and analysis of traditional methods which could be refined and strengthened. It should not take the form of the superimposition of alien methods which would sit heavily and unnaturally on the natural bent of the children.

All this is more easily said than done — because of the rapid revolutionary changes taking place in the life and social organization of developing countries.

One of the most important tasks facing us today is the preservation of our traditioal musical cultures. This should not be confined to sporadic recordings here and there, but should take the form of a systematic, comprehensive and meaningful programme. It is important that the most valid parts of the cultural traditions of areas should be preserved before any serious erosion takes place. In all such work it is essential to survey the total scene carefully and then set priorities.

There is the immense field of folk music waiting to be documented. Large numbers of manuscripts are scattered about waiting to be collected, tabulated, catalogued and microfilmed. The problem of 'editing' ancient texts will have to be given a new orientation. Texts have to be studied and their findings applied in the context of the twentieth century if they are to be meaningful. Several centuries separate authoritative and accepted texts. They have to be placed in perspective, viewed chronologically and related to contemporary practices.

This is an immense challenge and an enormous responsibility. It will mean a continuing programme of conservation and development during which enduring values will have to be jealously guarded. Such a programme should take into account not only the whole field of the arts, but should be an integral part of the total scene in every developing country with its own special and pressing needs of socio-economic development and national integration. Only such a plan will lead to the full flowering of ancient traditions in the context of changing times.

I have stressed the problems of preservation. By this I do no mean putting a full stop at any given time in history to growth and development and taking the state of music at that point as the norm for all times to come. Preservation should be seen not as an end in itself, but as a necessary prerequisite to healthy growth and new development — for study, for analysis, for full comprehension; preservation to ensure continuity of growth; so as to keep vital links alive; so as to establish springboards for future achievement.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

I have talked so far about our great inheritance; also the need for its preservation, What next?

Is this ancient tradition with all its sophistication and refinement adequate to meet the needs of our time? There are those who would like to cling to it, keep it pure and inviolate as if everything else is impure and wicked and false. There are others who feel that these traditions are relics of the past, the products of feudal ages which are at once an impediment and a burden to creative activity and freedom of expression. We are going through a period of transition with all its attendant restlessness and pressures from all sides. There are conflicts of ideas, misalliances as well as marriages, honest experiments as well as cheap imitations, genuine search as well as commercial vulgarization. The old and the puritans moan the loss of traditional values; the young and enterprising cry out for new worlds to explore and conquer. We are in for an exciting era of change and revaluation. It can be frustrating and enervating at times. But it is the sure sign of a rebirth, the darkness before revelation, the transition from the past to the present and the future. □

N.M.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The Concept of the Rāga in Carnātic Music

S. Ramanathan

The term *rāga* in a way defies description. The nearest translation could be 'melody type'. The nearest equivalent would be mode or *maqām* or *āwāz.*

The concept of *ālāpana* (elaboration) of a *rāga* is typical of Indian music. The musician can take up any particular *rāga* and elaborate on it, giving full vent to his imagination. *Rāga ālāpana* has been compared to a chess game; though the basic rules are fixed, every rendering of *ālāpana* is a new experience.

Quite like a musical scale, the *rāga* is made up of musical notes called in Indian music *shadja, rishabha, gāndhāra, madhyama, panchama, dhaivata* and *nishāda* which are represented by the symbols *sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni* respectively. But every *rāga* has its own special characteristics. One has to reckon which is the life-note (*jiva-svara*), on what note to start (*graha*), with what note to end a musical phrase (*nyāsa*), what note to use sparingly (*alpatva*), what note to use profusely (*bahutva*), and to what note embellishments (*gamaka*) are to be applied.

We come across this definition of *rāga* in *Brihaddeshi,* written about the 7th century A.D.* by Mātanga Muni: *Rāga* is made up of musical notes, adorned by *varna. Varna* is of four kinds – ascending, descending, *sthayi* (staying on a particular note) and *sanchāri* (combining ascent and descent).

The *Nātyashāstra* of Bharata is an important work for understanding the history of Indian music. Scholars are not agreed about the date of the work. They assign its writing to the period between the second century B.C. and the fourth century A.D. Bharata describes two basic scales – *shadja-grāma* and *madhyama-grāma* – giving the intervals between the pairs of successive notes of each scale. The *grāmas* give rise to *jātis* which may be counted as the forerunners of *rāgas. Shadja-grāma* has been accepted by scholars as the equivalent of *Kharaharapriya* (the Dorian mode). *Madhyama-grāma* differs from the former with its diminished fifth. Bharata speaks of eighteen *jātis.*

Bharata speaks highly of the music of peninsular India. He says: "The Southerners – the people dwelling between the Vindhyā mountains in the north and the ocean in the south – are adept in the arts of vocal music, instrumental music and the dance."

The melodic system of India was highly developed even before the Christian era. The Tamil name for *rāga* is *pan Tolkāppiam,* the ancient Tamil grammar, divides the land into five regions and assigns the *pans Kurinchi, Marutam, Mullai, Neital* and *Pālai* to them.

The Tamil *Sangam* classics contain many references to various *pans.*

*Opinions are divided on this: a scholar like the late Dr V. Raghavan places *Brihaddeshi* in the 9th century A.D. –Ed.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Silappadikāram, a Tamil classic of the second century A.D., and its two commentaries abound in information on the music and dance of the South. The *Silappadikāram* speaks of the ancient method of arranging the musical notes in a zodiacal circle. The musical notes are assigned positions among the twelve houses of the zodiac. From a study of their positions, the fundamental scale is found to be equivalent to the *Harikambodi* scale (Mixolidian mode). This is corroborated by the fact that the scale obtained on the south Indian flute or Nagasvaram is precisely *Harikambodi.* It may be noted that the *Shadja-grāma* of Bharata was also adopted as the basis for deriving other scales. By the modal shift of tonic, seven scales (*pālais*) are derived and these give rise to 103 *pans.*

The 7th and 8th centuries witnessed a tremendous spurt in the musical activity of the South. It was the period of Nayanmars and Alwars who flooded the land with their musical hymns called *tevāram* and *divyaprabhandam.* It may be of interest to note that even in the West the Gregorian chants, based on ecclesiastical modes, took shape during just about the same period.

In the *tevāram,* 23 of the 103 *pans* were used. Thanks to Raja Raja Cholan who ascended the throne in 985 A.D. and ordained that *tevāram* hymns be sung in temples, the music of the *tevāram* has been preserved to this day. It is of interest to learn that the term *rāga* is incorporated in the names of several *tevāram pans,* e.g. *Natta rāgam, Takka rāgam, Pazhayantakka rāgam, Megarāga Kurinchi rāgam.*

The Tamil Isai Sangam of Madras has, after a thorough research on *tevāram pans,* established that the following *pans* correspond to the *rāgas* noted against each.

Pans	*Rāgas*
Nattapalai	*Nata*
Chevvazhi	*Yedukulakambodi*
Megarāga Kurinchi rāgam	*Nilāmbari*
Kauchikam	*Bhairavi*
Gāndhāra panchamam	*Kedāragowla*
Panchamam	*Ahiri*
Chenchurutti	*Madhyamāvathi*
Pazhanthakka rāgam	*Shuddha Sāveri*
Puranirmai	*Bauli*
Indālam	*Mālavagowla*
Viyazhakurinchi	*Sowrāshtram*
Chikamaram	*Nādanāmakriya*
Andali Kurinchi	*Sama*
Kurinchi	*Harikambodi*
Takkesā, *Takka*	*Kambodi*
Nātta rāgam, *Satāri*	*Panturvarāli*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Gāndhāram
Piyantai Gāndhāram
Kolli] *Navaroz*
Kolli Kauvanam

Though the *divyaprabhandam* hymns were also like the *tevāram* set to *pans*, their music is irretrievably lost. The names of the 103 *pans* of Tamil music are found in the lexicons *Pinkala Nikandu* and *Divākara Nikandu* of the 11th century A.D.

During the 7th and 8th centuries, the South was the domain of the Pallavas who were great Sanskrit scholars. It was during their rule that the names of *rāgas* were Sanskritized. For example *Mullai pan* became *Mohanam, Pazhampanchuram* became *Shankarabharanam* and so on. It was also the Pallava king Mahendra Varman who carved the musical inscriptions at Kudumiyamalai and Thirumayam in Pudukottai district. These inscriptions were intended for beginners in music and contained *svara* passages grouped in fours in ancient *grāma-rāgas* like *Kaishika Madhyama, Sadarika,* etc. But these have not been deciphered so far. The symbols *sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni* appear for the first time in these inscriptions.

The next important work on Indian music is Sarangadeva's *Sangita Ratnākara.* This work enumerates and tries to describe as many as 264 *rāgas.* Sārangadeva classified these *rāgas* into ancient *rāgas* (*purvaprasiddha*) and *rāgas* which were just coming into vogue (*adhunāprasiddha*). Thus it is evident that the *rāga* system was undergoing a process of evolution. Many current *rāgas* can be identified among the *rāgas* of Sārangadeva, e.g., *Mālavagowla, Kedāragowla, Shankarabharanam* and *Sri rāgam.*

Vidyāranya, founder of the Vijayanagara empire (1336 A.D.), is to be credited with the first work on Carnātic music – *Sangitasāra.* The Vijayanagara empire was called *Karnātaka Samsthāna.* This is probably the reason why south Indian music came to be called Carnātic music.

The concept of *mela* and *janya* (main mode and derivative) is also to be traced to the *Sangitasāra* for it refers to 15 *melas* and fifty derivative *rāgas.* The *Sangita Ratnākara* contains a detailed description of how a *rāga* is to be elaborated in several stages.

The *mela-janya* concept was further elaborated by Rāmāmātya in his *Svaramelā Kalānidhi* (1550). He mentions 19 *melas* and several derivatives from each. He also classifies *rāgas* into superior, middling and inferior *rāgas.* He calls *Mālavagowla* the best of the superior *rāgas.* It is noteworthy that Purandaradāsa, who was a contemporary of Rāmāmātya, is supposed to have composed *svarāvalis, janta varisais* and *alankāras* in *rāga Mālavagowla.*

In 1610 Somanātha wrote *Rāga Vibodha* wherein he mentions 23 *melas* with many derivatives. In the latter half of the 17th century, Venkatamakhi expounded the scheme of 72 *melakartās.* He divided the octave into two parts: *sa* to *ma* and *pa* to *sa.* Keeping *sa* and *ma* constant, the four intervening semi-tones can be combined in six different ways. Similarly, keeping *pa* and *sa* constant, the four intervening semi-tones can also be combined in six ways. Each of the *sa ri ga ma* combinations in the lower tetrachord can be combined in six ways with *pa dha ni sa* of the upper tetrachord. So 36 *melas* are obtained. By replacing the *shudha-madhyama* with the *prati-madhyama*– the semi-tone

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

between the fourth and fifth note – another set of 36 *melas* are obtained. This was the scheme of Venkatamakhi. But it must be noted that he did not conceive of the *melas* as having seven notes both in the ascent and descent. For example he calls *Kedāragowla* a *mela,* though it has five notes in the ascent and seven in the descent. Nor did he name the *melakartās,* the only exception being *Simharava,* the 58th *mela.* It is believed it was his grandson Muthu Venkatamakhi who gave nomenclatures like *Kanakāmbari, Penadyuti,* etc. in his *geetam* called *Rāgānga Rāga Anukramanikā.*

It was Govindāchārya, the author of *Sangraha Choodāmani,* who insisted that a *mela* should contain seven notes in the right sequence both in the ascent and descent. The nomenclatures *Kanakāngi, Ratnāngi, Gānamurti,* etc. are found in this work. It was this nomenclature that was adopted by Mahā Vaidyanātha Iyer in his immortal *Mela Rāga Mālika.*

Thulajā, who wrote his *Sangita Sārāmritha* in 1712, considered Venkatamakhi's scheme infructuous. But within a space of six decades, there appeared on the scene Thyāgarāja and Dīkshitar who immortalized many of the *melakartās* through their compositions.

Out of the 72 *melakartās* innumerable derivative *rāgas* were made possible. These derivative *rāgas* can be classified as *sampoorna, audava* (pentatonic) and *shadava* (hexatonic). Thyāgarāja and Dīkshitar did not compose in any *rāga* with less than five notes.

Prior to Venkatamakhi, *rāgas* were also classified as *rāgānga, upānga, bhāshānga* and *kriyānga.* But the *kriyānga rāgas* which were used to express emotions like anger, fear, etc. lost their significance. After the advent of the *melakartā* scheme, the *melakartās* were the *rāgāngas,* derivatives having only the notes of the parent scale the *upāngas,* and those having notes other than the notes of the parent scale the *Bhāshāngas.*

Manambuchavadi Venkatasubbiah, Patnam Subramania Iyer, Kakinada Krishna Iyer, Muthiah Bhāgavathar, Mysore Vasudevachar and several others have contributed to the evolution of new *rāgas* like *Kuthukalam, Kathanakuthukalam, Sankara, Nivoshti* and *Sunādavinodini.* There are also a few *rāgas* which owe their origin to folk music, like *Punnagavarāli, Chenchurutti* and *Anandabhairavi.*

Many Hindustāni rāgas such as *Hamir Kalyān, Yaman Kalyān, Kāfi, Sindhubhairavi* and *Behāg* were adopted and adapted to the Carnātic system and these were used by Dīkshitar, Thyāgarāja, Swathi Thirunāl and Gopāla Krishna Bhārathi. They come under the category of *deshi rāgas.*

The evolution of the *rāga* system is like a perennial river and a *rāga* that is obscure today may blossom into a popular *rāga* tomorrow. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The Concept of the Rāga in Hindustāni Music

M.R. Gautam

Indian music has given the world *rāga* and *tāla* — *rāga* as the melodic microcosm and *tāla* embracing rhythm. Before proceeding to describe the *rāga* as it exists today, it is necessary to have an idea of its evolution.

The term *rāga*, as it is known today, is a technical word implying several characteristics. In Bharata's *Nātyashāstra* (dated 2nd century B.C. — 2nd century A.D.), there are references to *grāma-rāgas* with instructions for their appropriate use in varied dramatic situations. Whereas the *rāga* as a melodic scheme had been in existence and in vogue from Bharata's time, it was Mātanga (circa 7th century) who in his *Brihaddeshi* laid down for the first time a clear, specified definition (*paribhāshā*) of *rāga* and dealt with *rāga* as a technical term. This definition lays down that a peculiar arrangement of musical tune so adorned with *svara* and *varna* as to please the mind of the hearer is called *rāga*.

In course of time, with a steady decline of the ancient *grāma-murchhanā-jāti* system, the *rāga* began to evolve into a more crystallized form. The conditions or *lakshanas* that were originally set down for *jātis* were all ascribed to the *rāga*, namely *graha, amsha, nyāsa, vinyāsa, apanyāsa, sanyāsa, mandra, tāra, alpatva, bahutva*. These ten *lakshanas* or qualifications were later expanded to include *vādi* (sonant), *samvādi* (consonant), *anuvādi* (assonant), *vivādi* (dissonant), *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva*. Then the earlier *lakshanas* like *grahasvara, apanyāsa, sanyāsa, vinyāsa*, gradually began to be left out of *rāga* delineation. *Grahasvara* did not have much relevance in the *rāga* system as the fixed tonic had been established. *Amshasvara* began to be used as *vādi* (sonant). The sonant-consonant axis in the *rāga* became its melodic axis.

Rāga in its broadest sense could be defined as a mode having a rigid and apparently circumscribed form in view of the several conditions laid down for its elaboration; nevertheless, it is capable of infinite improvisation. It is like yogic discipline. Just as the yogi disciplines his body and mind in order to experience that unity-consciousness, be in communion with the Infinite and obtain total release from the thraldom of flesh and matter, so also the *rāga* of Indian music, while appearing to be very rigid in its form, is capable of limitless variety and expansion. In the medieval period, *rāgas* were dedicated to particular deities. A specific colour, element, or mood was ascribed to each *rāga*, apart from gender. Several texts on music, namely *Sangita Ratnākara, Sangita Pārijāta, Svaramela Kalānidhi*, etc. give descriptions of these aspects of the *rāga*. This only goes to show the Hindu concept of unity in diversity — to perceiving all human pursuits converging in the Supreme Entity or Consciousness — be it religion, sport, art or philosophy. Music, being one of the finest of the arts, was considered one of the direct

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

paths to spiritual salvation. Each *svara* began to be associated with a particular deity, whose invocation through proper supplication was considered necessary to attain mastery over that particular *svara*. It became customary to pray before practising music. In other words, music became a part of religion and was therefore, from the earliest period, referred to as the *Gāndharva Veda* and was supposed to be the fifth *Veda (upaveda)*. But with the coming of the Muslims to India, and later on their occupation of a major portion of our country, the evolution of music in the North took a different turn.

Music also had its share of stagnation and deterioration. But there was also a beneficial side. Although the majority of Muslim rulers were averse to music as enjoined by their religion, some of them were great lovers and patrons of the art. They encouraged musicians who often adorned their courts. Some of the notable monarchs were Allauddin Khilji, Ghiasuddin Tughlaq, Sultān Hussain Shirki of Jaunpur, Mohammad-bin Tughlak, Akbar, Shāh Jahān, Mohammad Shah Rangile of Delhi, and many small chieftains. Some of these rulers invited musicians from Iran. They came to India, were much impressed by Indian music and, while imbibing it, gave Indian music some new melodies. Hazrat Amir Khusrau, who lived in the time of the Khiljis and Ghiasuddin Tughlaq, is credited with the composition of a few *rāgas* combining Iranian melodies or *maqams*. Some of the *rāgas* attributed to him are *Bahār, Sāzgiñ, Zilāf, Sarpardā, Paraj*.

The *rāga* thus acquired a wider definition. It shed some of its old rigidity and began absorbing some of the aspects of other melodic systems of music. The *shāstras* were prescribed by the old scholars, and the *rāga* as performed by musicians after the advent of the Muslims naturally began to deviate and diverge. Muslims, most of whom were Hindu converts, began to disregard the *shāstras*, which were in Sanskrit, but kept up high standards of performance. The wedge between the *shāstras* and music as practised widened and kept on widening. While the former remained static, the latter was dynamic. The *rāga* which was supposed to be powerful enough to invoke the elements of nature to do as bidden by the devout singer — the *rāga Dipaka* was supposed to produce heat even to the point of incadescence and inflammation, the *rāga Megh Malhār* was supposed to produce rain — lost all its supernatural powers, as it were, and became more and more a purely aesthetic form.

The steady emphasis on the aesthetic aspect placed the accent on the erotic or *shringāra* aspect of the *rāga*. The *rāga* was ascribed various moods, all of which were erotic or the result of erotic involvement. Each *rāga* was associated with a particular *bhāva*, an elaborate *nāyaka-nāyikā bheda* was evolved, and particular *rāgas* were associated with particular *nāyaka-nāyikā* categories. This continued up to the beginning of this century in Hindustāni music in a partial and notional way. In Carnātic music, with the coming of Pandit Venkatamakhi, the entire classification of *rāgas* underwent a radical change. He, by classifying all the *rāgas* of Carnātic music within the framework of 72 *melakartās*, brought about a more scientific classification. After Venkatamakhi, Carnātic music began to get more and more precise and organized in its interpretation of *rāgas*. There was a steady diminution of elaboration of *rāgas*, and with the advent of the great musical Trinity in the last century, the importance of *rāga* elaboration declined further. What became important were the great compositions of the Trinity —

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Thyāgarāja, Dīkshitar and Shyāma Shāstry.

In the North, despite constant Muslim invasions and disturbances, music still retained its ancient flavour and did not eschew its old quality. The *rāga* continued to be elaborated with feeling and devotion. It developed a new dimension by shedding some of its restrictive qualities and by absorbing the salutary aspects of free improvisation. The *rāga,* as it is rendered today, has undergone considerable change.

Modern scholars have approached the classification of *rāgas* in different ways. The *rāga-rāgini* and *mela-thāta* systems are the major current classifications. Besides, a few other systems have been worked out. One is Amiya Sānyāl's system of classification of *rāga* and *rāgini* through a study of various compositions in a particular *rāga* or *rāgini.* Sānyāl feels that in this manner the structure, mood, nature and even sex of a *rāga* can be determined. He has given copious examples of compositions in the *rāgas* he has examined. Another renowned scholar of music, O.C. Gangoly, has made a very interesting attempt to classify *rāgas* and *rāginis* in his book entitled *Rāgas and Rāginis.* Some foreign scholars have also attempted to write on this subject. One is Walter Kauffman. In his book *Rāgas of Northern Indian Music* he has tried to describe the characteristics of *rāgas* and attempted to classify them on the basis of similarities of characteristics. The attempt is commendable; Kauffman has given a wide repertoire of *rāgas,* but the treatment of some of the rare *rāgas* could have been better. Another book is Nazir Jairazbhoy's *The Rāgas of Northern Indian Music.* The author has tried to prove the lack of validity of the old Indian concept of *shruti* which determines the tone value of the *svara.* He has taken pains to record several musicians, both vocal and instrumental, performing the same *rāga,* and has tried to measure the same note sung or played by all these famous artistes. He has tried to prove that while the listener relishes the renderings of these artistes, his ear seems unable to register subtle discrepancies and even deviations of *shrutis.* For example, Jairazbhoy takes the note *gāndhāra* in the *rāga Yaman* rendered by Gangubāi Hangal (vocal), Pannālāl Ghosh (flute), Vilāyat Khan (sitar), and others, and points out that while these musicians appear to intone the note accurately, the measurement of the precise value of the *shrutis* of the same note differs in each case; according to him, the *shrutis* differ to the extent of several frequencies per second. Yet none of the musicians would seem out of tune. Jairazbhoy says that the area of tunefulness for the trained musicial ear is very much larger than what is prescribed in the *shāstras.* Thus he feels that the *shrutis* are not adequate for determining the precise place of *svaras* in the *saptaka.* On the theoretical side,while describing the time-cycle of *rāgas* or the *thāta* system of *rāga* classification in his brief history of Indian music, he has followed Pandit Bhātkhande closely.

The attempt of Pandit Bhātkhande to classify the entire range of *rāgas* of Hindustāni music under ten *thātas* has also not been successful. His classification has been a little laboured and forced in respect of certain *rāgas* like *Lalit, Lalita Gauri* and *Lalit Pancham. Pancham rāgas* like *Ahir Bhairava* and *Ananda Bhairava* cannot be classified under his system because of the combination of *thātas* in the same *rāga* in different tetrachords. But he has himself stated in his book that if the number of *thātas* were increased from ten to 32, then the *thāta* system would be more comprehensive.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The system of mathematical classification of *rāgas* seems inadequate for Hindustāni music. Pandit Bhātkhande has tried to combine the mathematical, precise approach of Pandit Venkatamakhi with the old *rāga lakshanas* (like *vādi-samvādi*) of our music. This seems to him the best approach for classification of our music. Bhātkhande has taken note of the *rāgānga* also in his classification and description of *rāgas*. If elaborated further, this aspect of *anga* will be helpful in understanding the *rāga* and its character better.

There are two schools of thought regarding *rāga* classification which at present are prominent in northern India. One is that of Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and the other of Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhātkhande. The former believes in the classification of *rāgas* according to their respective *angas* or essential aesthetic features, eschewing completely the mathematical approach. The latter, as already stated, has followed the system of *mela-thāta* classification.

Hindustāni *rāgas* are different in their flavour from the *rāgas* of Carnātic music. They still adhere to the old tradition of *vādi-sāmvādi* and *angas*. That is the reason why there are families of *rāga* like *Bilāwal, Bhairava, Kalyān, Kānadā, Todi, Malhār, Nata,* etc. This is possible only because of adherence to the technique of *angas* in the rendition of *rāgas*. For example, *rāga Bhairava* has a characteristic phrase which distinguishes it from other *rāgas*. With that phrase as the signature phrase, other *prakāras* or varieties of *Bhairava* have been created, like *Bengal Bhairava, Ahir Bhairava, Ananda Bhairava, Shivamat Bhairava, Krishnamat Bhairava, Kabiri Bhairava, Saurashtra Bhairava* and *Virāta Bhairava*. This approach has made it possible in Hindustāni music to have more than one *rāga* with the same set of notes by merely shifting the *vādi-samvādi* axis. For example the *rāgas Bhopāli, Deshkār* and *Jait Kalyān* have the same pentatonic scale: *sa ri ga pa dha*. All the notes are *shuddha* or natural, but in the rendering each *rāga* will appear different because of the difference in emphasis (or lack of it) of the various notes as also differences in the transilience of these notes. Although this requires considerable mastery over the notes, it has enriched the variety and enhanced the scope for aesthetic elaboration in Hindustāni music.

Rāgas are aesthetic forms and when the *svaras* of a particular *rāga* are rendered with absolute precision the sensitive musician will experience the inexplicable wonderful relationship of notes in the melodic structure of the *rāga*. The melody produced will create within him an ineffable tranquillity. It seems paradoxical to produce musical sound without, when silence reigns within. This is, as I understand it, the *summum bonum* of Indian music. The *rāga* is an artistic creation and, depending on the excellence of the artiste, is capable of being rendered in several ways. The rendering can be a display of mere craftsmanship or superb artistry.

The *rāga* is the unique gift of Indian music to the world. In no other music is any musical form exactly the same as the *rāga,* though there are somewhat similar concepts in Arab, Iranian and Greek music. Iran has to some extent maintained its individuality. Indonesian music has maintained its unique melodic structure. Arab music also has certain distinctive features.

Indian music, despite the constant influence of Europe for the last two hundred

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

years and more, has maintained its identity. That is basically because of its *rāga* and *tāla*. The tonal intervals (*shrutis*) in Indian music are not equally tempered, and thus there cannot be any harmony of the type employed in Western music. No modulation (key-changing) of the type obtaining in Western music would seem possible in Indian music. These fundamental differences in the two kinds of music have been responsible, in my opinion, for the maintenance of the identity of Indian music in spite of the continuous impact of the West.

The *rāga*, with its melodic form and inbuilt harmony, has caught the imagination of many young musicians in Europe and America. Even outside jazz, modern composers and gifted musicians are experimenting with improvisation. The experiment is worth watching. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Rāga and Tāla: A Western View

Lyon Leifer

This article is an attempt at familiarizing the reader— especially a non-Indian reader – with the broad format of Hidustāni music. The complex comrising *rāga, tāla* and *bandish* along with its ample scope for improvisation and creativity has been explained. The principal theoretical concepts of *rāga*-formation and various technical devices including ornamentation have been laid out.

The materials for this article are derived almost entirely from my study of the Hindustani *rāga* system under the magnificent tutelage of my Guru, Devendra Murdeshwar. No presentation of these materials in the condensed form of an article could begin to convey the depths of the system as he and other master musician/teachers of India have manifested it. Some speculative ideas given here about the historical evolution of the *rāgas* are my own responsibility, as are any shortcomings in the article.

My hope in writing is to give the listener a set of basic concepts which may enable a *more aware* sort of listening than may be possible without them.

What is a *rāga*?

A Hindustāni *rāga* can be described as a modal melody-type which gives rise to a particular range of possibilities for communication of emotion and evocation of mood. Each *rāga* also gives rise to a range of possibilities for structural development. A *rāga* is modal because it comprises a certain number of notes which are not altered during the rendition and which are classified according to their positions in a set of scalar modes. It is a melody-type because it has a given, historically determined melodic shape. Within that shape and in accordance with a set of operational rules, the performer is free to develop the *rāga* as he or she sees fit.

What is called the Hindustāni *rāga* system (prevalent in northern India) could be described as all the *rāgas* which are in use; and the songs (compositions), methods of development and styles of presentation which are used in the performance of these *rāgas.*

Rāga music and Western classical music hold in common their most basic musical building blocks – the twelve-note octave, the recognition of the diatonic scales of scalar modes generated from its successive degrees, and the temporal organization of notes into regular metre. But where Western music, treating notes as discrete entities to be combined with each other other in shifting allgnments (harmonies) has created a great body of harmonic and contrapuntal resources, Indian music has treated notes as stopping points along an aural continuum, giving rise to a wealth of expressive possibilities through microtonalism. Western music, at least since 1600, has used shifting harmonies as a ground for melody which must fit into the harmonic scheme.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

This led, over the course of time, to focussing mainly on the major and minor modes. *Rāgas* use a fixed ground or drone which simply defines the aural continuum. This frees melody not only to explore the 'space between the notes', but also to utilize systematically an entire range of modes.

A *rāga* performance can be enjoyed both as deep emotional communication and as tonal structuring of a very high order. However, in order to gain these enjoyments, it is necessary to meet the system on its own terms. For the Western listener, the first requirement is generally to cease expecting to hear harmony and polyphony. Hindustāni music makes its statements and achieves its effects on the basis of a highly refined and systematic approach to melody and to rhythm.

Hindustāni music depends (as does Western music) for its deepest effects on a high degree of structural coherence and on substantial listener awareness of that structure. Most highly prized are purity and elegance of proportion in developing a *rāga*; subtlety and imagination in detail, shading and elaboration; and vividness and spontaneity of presentation within its highly defined parameters (which are well known to informed listeners).

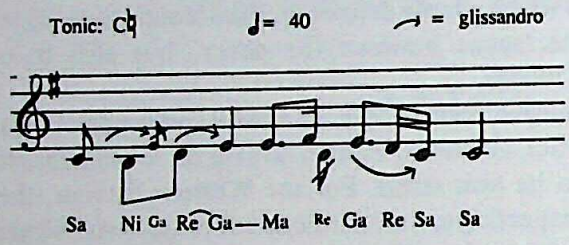
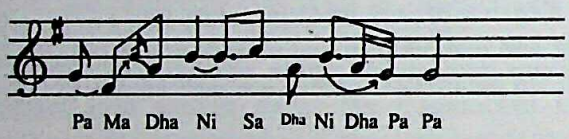
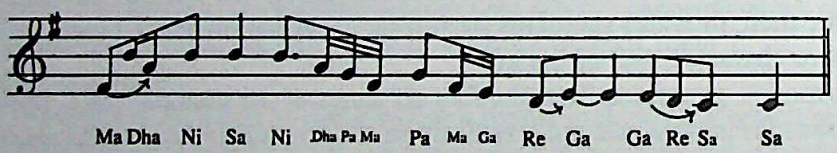
Consequently, what is most important to *teach* to enable appreciation is precisely those parameters: the melodic and rhythmic materials out of which raga performances are developed. What comes out of this is aural *recognition* of the basic *rāgas* and *tālas*, of the stages of development in a *rāga* performance and of the various devices being utilized. This, then, provides standards for further appreciation of the range, diversity and expressive characteristics of the art.

The six modes, generated from the first six notes of the diatonic scale, provide a theoretical basis for the analysis and classification of a great percentage of the *rāgas* used in north India. In addition, the north Indian system includes four modes (or *thāts*) not so derived, which contain one or more augmented intervals (see modes 1–10 on Chart I). This system of ten *thāts* was only developed into its full and current form by Pandit V.N. Bhātkhande (1860-1936), the great collector and theorist of Hindustāni music. Although it is a relatively new system, it is a convincing one, in that it pulls together elements of previous theoretical attempts going back quite far in history, seems to successfully describe what happens in the process of *rāga* generation and differentiation, and enables a clearer understanding of the system's general scope.

The principal *rāga* of *Kalyān thāt* (equivalent to the Lydian mode) is *Rāga Yaman*. This is generally the first *rāga* taught to Indian music students. We will now proceed to show the process of generating *rāgas* from scales, using *Rāga Yaman* as our first example.

The problem here is to show how a particular *rāga Yaman*, arises out of *Kalyān thāt*. Any or all of its notes could be used, but the thrust of the *rāga* system is to create a certain order, shape and resulting mood, so that others can exist within the same mode.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Thus, the melodic figure:

which is probably an old folk idea, can be put into *Kalyān thāt* and a condition can be derived from it, namely, not allowing the tonic to be followed by the second degree. That figure is matched in the upper terachord with the response:

(and a like prohibition against a move from the fifth to the sixth degree). Proceeding from there to the upper tonic and back down the mode as follows:

we get a simple statement of the *rāga.* These are the basic *svara vistāra,* or melodic figures, of *rāga Yaman.*

In a rāga all the notes are not equal in emphasis. By dint of placement and length, certain notes take prominent positions, most notably the third and seventh degrees. This is in accordance with the principle of assigning to every *rāga* a most prominent note, *vādi,* and a second-most prominent note, *samvādi.* These notes are generally in a perfect fourth/fifth relationship to each other. In the case of *rāga Yaman,* a great number of its melodic figures end on the third degree (*ga* in Indian terminology), causing the major triad to sound — heard — as the melody note third (*ga*) against the sounding drone tonic (*sa*) and fifth (*pa*). This prominence of the third degree gives the *rāga* a sweet and reposeful character. The mood of this *rāga* is considered to be blissful, and it is thought of as one of the most beautiful of *rāgas.* In particular, the resolution of the raised fourth (*ma*) to the third (*ga*), carried out in a slow glissando effect called *meend,* creates an effect of release of tension. What is key is the overall melodic shape on the one hand and the evocation of the mood of the *rāga* on the other.

Each of the ten *thāts,* or scales, on Bhatkhande's system similarly gives rise to a principal *rāga* and subsidiary *rāgas.* This is done through varying patterns of ascent and descent, introduction of particular melodic twists *(vakra)* and determination of *vādi* and

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

samvādi. Key to appreciating the system as a system is to learn the features of the major *rāgas* and see how particular applications give rise to the *svara-vistāra* (melodic figures) which characterize each *rāga.*

I now attempt to give an idea of another level of complexity in *rāga* formation, namely transposed and mixed *rāgas.*

A very good example of *rāga* transposition is *rāga Lalit,* which has the pattern of *rāga Todi* taken from the note *shuddha ma* (perfect fourth above the tonic).

Since *rāgas* like *Lalit* are long established *rāgas,* it is clear that the device of transposing *rāgas* to create other *rāgas* is not new. New *rāgas* are also being created in this way.

Another method of what might be called second-order *rāga* creation involves mixing characteristics of two different *rāgas.* An example is *rāga Puriyā-Kalyān,* a mixutre of *Puriyā* and *Yaman.* This *rāga* could most simply be described as *rāga Yaman* with a flatted second (*komal re*). Another way of looking at it is to say that the lower half of the scale (1 — 4) is from *Puriyā* and the upper half is *Kalyān.* Both *rāgas* share *vādi* and *samvādi,* namely, the third and seventh degrees. For all these reasons, the two *rāgas* are rather easy to mix together. In fact, phrases of both *Puriyā* and *Yaman* can be played in each half-octave. By temporarily leaving out the fifth *(pa),* one can play pure *Puriyā.* By staying away from the flattened second *(komal re)* one can play nearly all of *Rāga Yaman.* So the musician has in *Puriyā-Kalyān* the possibility of weaving substantial strands of two *rāgas* together into a mixture which, at the same time, has a particular character of its own.

Microtonalism is a major aspect of Hindustāni music — an area opened up for exploration by Hindustāni music focusing on the purely melodic aspect. At this point, it should prove useful to discuss the principal microtonal devices found in the music and to illustrate them.

Probably most obvious to the listener is the extensive use of *meend* (glissando). While glissando is, of course, not unknown to Western classical music, it tends to fall into the category of a rarely used device, reserved mainly for special effects. *Meend,* however, is part and parcel of *rāga* music. This is so much the case that, in the slow presentation and elaboration of a *rāga,* separate notes can often hardly be said to exist, except as the momentarily touched limitations in a curvilinear motion and the starting and ending points in a phrase.

Another such device is *āndolan* or rocking back and forth in pitch within a microtonal compass. *Āndolan* is found in some *rāgas* more than others and is a particular identifying feature of the scale degrees of certain *rāgas.* In the case of *rāga Darbāri,* for insance, it is the third and sixth degrees whose *āndolit* treatment lends so much of the specific character of *rāga Darbari. Andolit* also seems to be more used by some *gharānās* (schools of performance) than others, and so is also a matter of stylistic approach.

Gamak, or rocking in glissando between one scale step and another, has already been mentioned as characteristic of the stage of rendition after slow elaboration, when the tempo begins to rise. A wide range of different types of *gamak* exists, characterized by speed, number of repetitions of a given note, intensity of attack, etc. (These points

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

should best be demonstrated live in a lecture.) Other microtonal devices are combinations of two or more of the above. For example, *zamzamā* is a kind of quick double-*gamak* followed by a turn.

A very important aspect of the music's microtonalism is the fact that the placement of a given scale step will vary from *rāga* to *rāga* (and performer to performer to a certain extent). Thus, in three night-time *rāgas,* all of which share the use of the flattened third degree, namely, *Bāgeshri, Mālkauns* and *Darbāri-Kānarā,* each has its own specific treatment of the flattened third. Of the three, *Mālkauns* has the highest third degree; it is usually heard from above or in connection with the fourth step, taken as a grace note or as a gamak of 4–3, 4–3. *Bāgeshri's* flattened third also usually emerges as a descent from 4. But the descent is a slow *meend* ending with a touch of *āndolan* and the pitch is lower than that of *Mālkauns. Darbāri-Kānarā's* third degree is the lowest of all three. It emerges in ascent from the second, and has heavy *āndolan* whose lower limit is practically the second degree itself.

The Hindustāni *tāla* system parallels Western metre in that it strings together regular repetitions of sets of strong and weak beats. We must now look at (i) what principally differentiates the *tālas* from Western measures; (ii) the kinds of metric and rhythmic possibilities the Hindustāni approach creates; and (iii) how these possibilities have been concretely applied in both *rāga* performance and in solo drumming.

I would say that there are two main points differentiating the Hindustāni approach from the Western. First is the elevated role given to percussion as a performance element in general and in conveying metre in particular. A *rāga* performance is not truly complete without a compostion set in a *tāla* and accompanied by drums. The *tāla* is embodied in the melody and the melodist must be aware of where he or she is in the *tāla.* But the *tāla* is presented by the drummer and the audience orients itself to the *tāla* through following the strokes of the drums. In fact, it is the particular arrangment of drum strokes for each *tāla,* called the *thekā,* which defines the *tāla.* Thus, percussion exists on an entirely higher plane than in Western classical music, where its role has been essentially one of punctuation or accentuation of rhythm and metre. For an example of this, consider the Scherzo of Beethoven's 9th Symphony, with its relatively prominent tympanic part.

The second important difference lies in the fact that the *tālas* are broader-based in time than Western measures. They extend over (generally) larger numbers of beats and have particular rhythmical shapes – patterns of rise and fall – which are consequently broader than those of Western measures. Thus, a cycle of *teen tāla* (16 beats – roughly analagous to 4 measures of 4/4 time) has a distinct rise at the tenth beat and fall at the 14th. The main function of this is to differentiate the second half of the cycle from the first half, thus maintaining the broad base of the metre. Once the *tāla* has been introduced, it must be rigorously maintained until the composition being performed has been completely developed. Thus, renditions in *tāla* are cyclical in character. Further the conception of rhythmical development, once the composition has begun, is cyclical. *Sam,* the first beat of the cycle, serves both as the point of arrival for a concluded variation as well as the new beginning of a subsequent development.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The shape of the *tāla* is defined by a given arrangement of strokes on the drums known as the *thekā*. The Tablā, which is the principal accompanying drum-set used for providing accompaniment to *khayal* and some other forms of Hindustāni music, is capable of numerous *bols* (specific sounds produced by particular strokes). The two drums, extremely ingenious in construction, each produce both resonating and damped tones of either determined or indeterminate pitch. The right-hand drum *(tablā)* is tuned to the melodist's tonic while the left-hand drum *(bāyā)* plays in the bass over a wide range of both determined and indeterminate pitches. Various *bols* (each of which has a name) are then arranged to make the *thekās* of the different *tālas* (see Chart 2). These become the metrical framework for both melodic and rhythmic elaboration in performance.

In rāga performance, the *tablā* player will maintain the *thekā* (or some variation of it) throughout the rendition. Elaboration may be done by filling in various combinations of strokes between the basic strokes of the *thekā*. Or, a varying arrangement of strokes, called a *tukrā,* may be substituted for some number of beats in the *thekā* (providing that this substitution does not distort the basic shape of the *tāla*). A common form of substitution is the *tihāi* which consists of a given pattern of strokes played a total of three times and done in such a way that it ends on *sam,* the first beat of the cycle. The *tihāi* is also a melodic device. In fact, the two performers are often able to match melodic and percussive *tihāis* spontaneously.

When judiciously utilized, the various techniques of percussive elaboration enable the accompanist not only to provide the metrical framework for the melody but also to complement, accentuate and heighten its impact. Thus the accompanist should be highly conscious of *rāgas* in general and of the particular composition being used, as well as very quick to match the melodist's rhythm patterns or comment upon them. In this way, the performance achieves a highly unified character.

In solo drumming, the added aspects of systematic presentation of the Tablā's possibilities and systematic development of various types of rhythmic patterns also come into play. It should be said that, in solo drumming, the Tablā really comes into its own, displaying immense capabilities for rhythmical development and sparkling virtuosity. There are various schools of Tablā playing, each with its own particular approach to technique and composition. Some types of Tablā soloizing include *kāidā* (a pattern of strokes which is then systematically developed), *raillā* (a virtuosic kind of display pattern which can also be varied somewhat), *gat-tukrā* (fixed compositions of particular interest in the arrangements of strokes) and *chakkardār* (triple *tihāi* patterns, also arranged in advance).

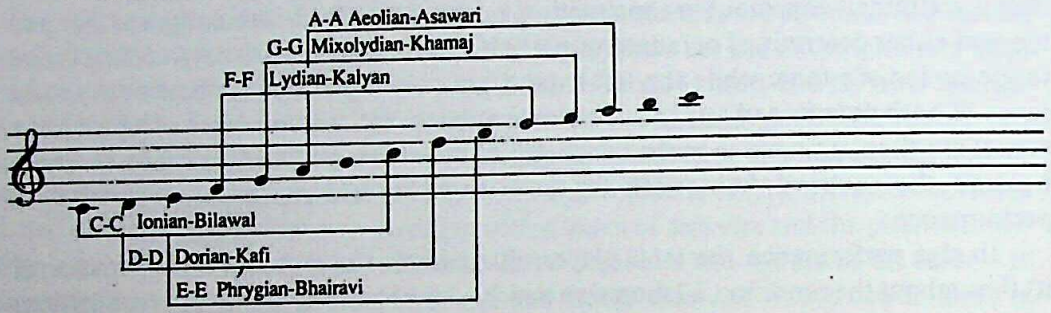
The first essential in a *rāga* performance is to create the *bhāva* or mood of the *rāga* through exposing its *svara-vistāra* effectively and affectively. Having done this, one elaborates upon the figurations developmentally, following one or another traditional pattern, and aiming to develop and deepen the mood of the *rāga.* The skill and creativity of the artist in carrying out the development are the main factors determining the interest or lack of it in a given rendition. Another crucial factor is the quality of the composition which is utilized in the rendition. The composition is a metred song,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHART 1

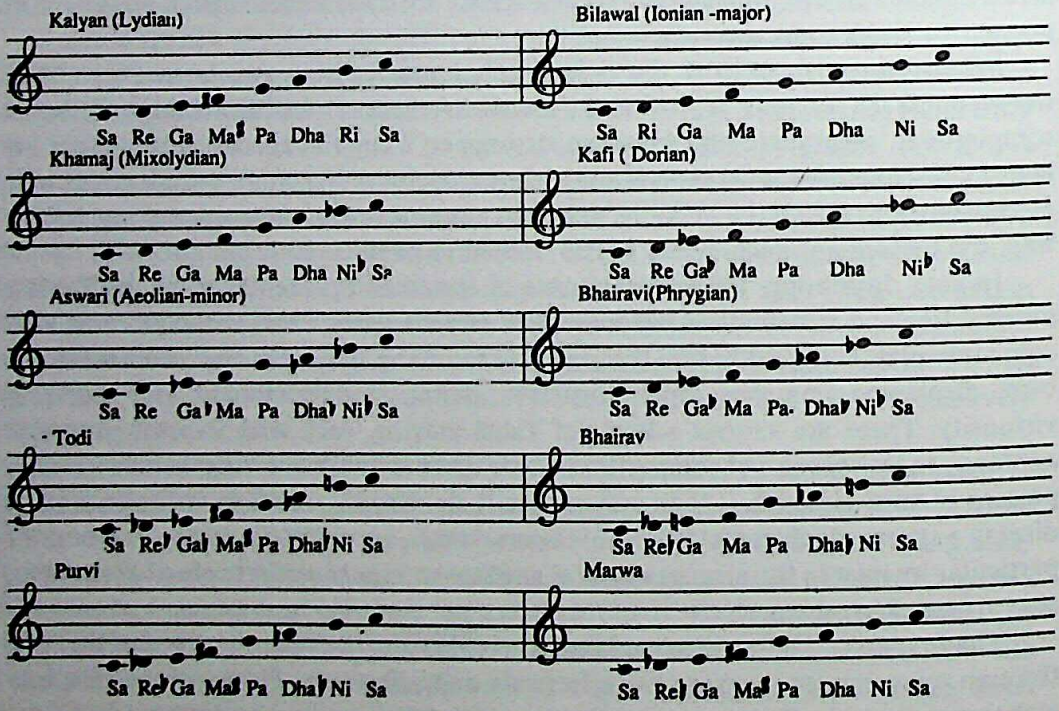
SCALES

a) Generation of modes from the natural diatonic (major) scale:



Each mode can be produced by playing only white notes on the piano, going as shown above. Note that the Lokrian mode (B to B) which is not in use in Hindusthani music also found no use in the development of western music.

b) The ten thaats of Bhatkande's System, with corresponding church mode names, shown from a common Sa (C)


Kalyan (Lydian)
Sa Re Ga Ma♯ Pa Dha Ri Sa
Bilawal (Ionian -major)
Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Sa
Khamaj (Mixolydian)
Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni♭ Sa
Kafi (Dorian)
Sa Re Ga♭ Ma Pa Dha Ni♭ Sa
Aswari (Aeolian-minor)
Sa Re Ga♭ Ma Pa Dha♭ Ni♭ Sa
Bhairavi(Phrygian)
Sa Re Ga♭ Ma Pa Dha♭ Ni♭ Sa
Todi
Sa Re♭ Ga♭ Ma♯ Pa Dha♭ Ni Sa
Bhairav
Sa Re♭ Ga Ma Pa Dha♭ Ni Sa
Purvi
Sa Re♭ Ga Ma♯ Pa Dha♭ Ni Sa
Marwa
Sa Re♭ Ga Ma♯ Pa Dha Ni Sa

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHART 2

THEKAS OR "TAL FRAMEWORKS"

In this chart the following symbols are used:

x - sam, the 1st beat
o - khali, a point or points in a tal characterized by rhythmic rise and indicated, when showing tal, by a wave of the hand.
| - shows the vibhag or divisions of the tal

The syllables above the numbers of the beats are the names of the bols or drum strokes. It is advised that listeners learn to recognize the sound of each stroke and associate it with that strokes's name.

1. Teen Tal - 16 beats

x				2				0				3				x
Dha	Dhin	Dhin	Dha	Dha	Dhin	Dhin	Dha	Dha	Tin	Tin	Ta	Ta	Dhin	Dhin	Dha	(Dha)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	1

This is the most common tal in Hindustani music. It is used by vocalists and instrumentalists in tempi varying from quite slow to moderate to exceptionally fast.

2. Ek Tal - 12 beats

x		0			2		0		3			4		x
Dhin	Dhin	Dha-ge		Te-re-ka-te	Tun	Na	Ka	Te	Dha-ge		Te-re-ka-te	Dhi	Na	(Dha)
1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	1

This tal is generally used for slow exposition of raga alap in vocal music.

3. Rupak Tal - 7 beats

0			1		2		0
Tin	Tin	Na	Dhi	Na	Dhi	Na	(Tin)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Generally used in madhya laya, moderate tempo, this tal's asymmetry and the fact that khali comes on the first beat give it its particular character.

4. Jhap Tal - 10 beats

x		2			0		3			x
Dhi	Na	Dhi	Dhi	Na	Ti	Na	Dhi	Dhi	Na	(Dhi)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1

5. Kherva - 8 beats

Dha	Ge	Na	Ka	Na	Ka	Dhi	Na
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

6. Dadra - 6 beats

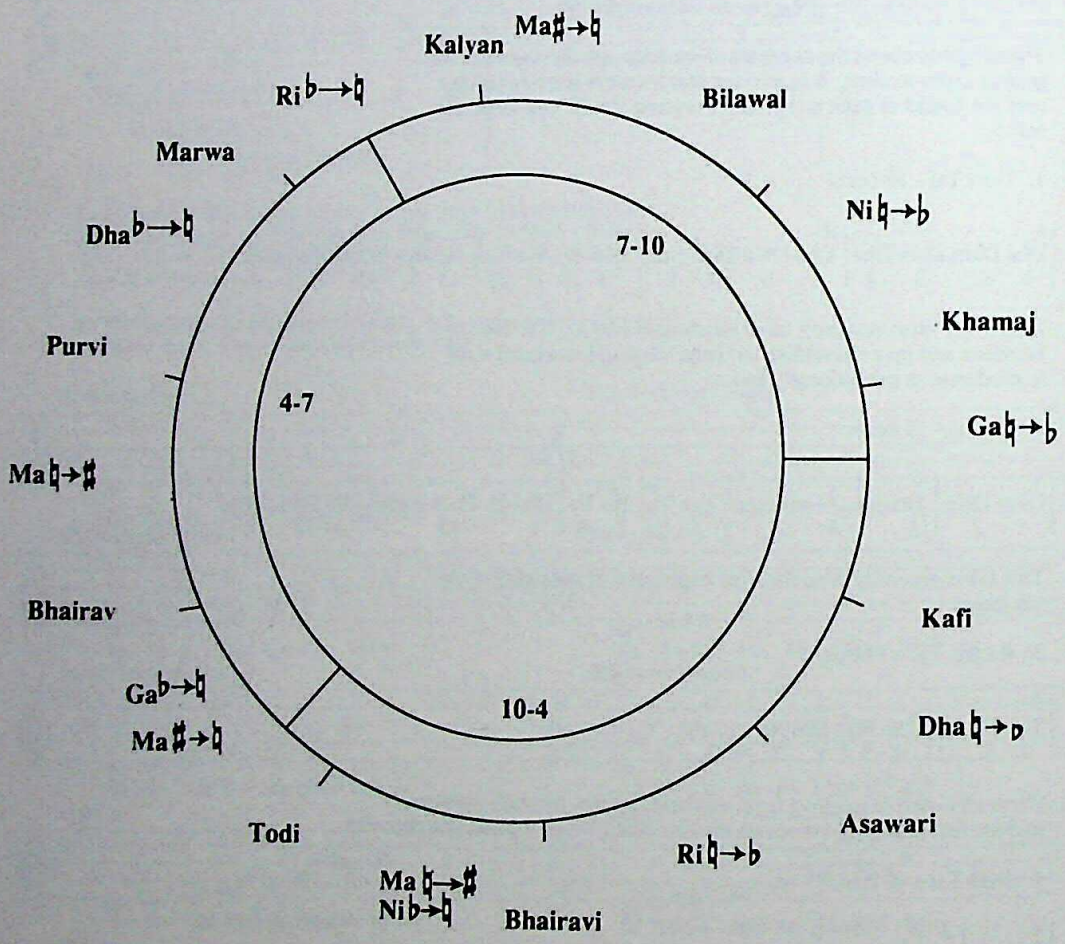
x			0		
Dha	Dhi	Dha	Dha	tin	Dha
1	2	3	4	5	6

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHART 3

THE TIME THEORY OF PERFORMANCE

This chart is derived from N.A. Jairazbhoy's The Ragas of North Indian Music, k971, Faber and Faber, London, p.63



Between each scale name I have added the name of the note or notes which change and the change which takes place.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

varying in length from two to several lines, and composed within the conditions of the *rāga* being performed. In a vocal rendition, the song will, of course, have a lyric. Traditionally, the songs are divided into two sections, *sthāyi* and *antarā*. In these, the first section is composed primarily in a range extending from about a fourth or fifth below the performer's home *sa* (tonic) to about *ni* (the seventh step above t). The *antarā*, or second section, focuses on the *sa* an octave above the home note, and is usually composed so as to descend at its completion to the finishing phrases of the first section, *sthāyi*.

The stringed instrumental format of *rāga* development is somewhat different from the vocal one. In it, the instrumentalist will generally do extensive *ālāp* (slow, unmetred reexposition consisting mainly of elaboration in *gamak*), and *jhālā* (a way of weaving the *rāga* melody into complex rhythm patterns heard against percussively struck drone strings — *chikari*), all occurring without accompaniment. After this extensive treatment, the Tablā will join in the rendition of a *gat*, a composition in the *rāga* meant for the string instrument. The *gat* is similar to the vocal compositions described previously in that it also has a *mukhdā*, or catch phrase, consists of *sthāyi* and *antarā*, and is rendered in connection with the presentation of *tānas* and *tihāis*.

A somewhat controversial aspect of Hindustāni music is the traditional view-point that associates given *rāgas* with particular times of day. Pandit Bhātkhande has proposed a grouping of the scales and their associated *rāgas* which both reflects the traditional performance times of most *rāgas* and also develops a succession of note alterations, going from scale to scale as the sun rises, sets, etc. (see Chart 3). There is no doubt in my mind that, if nothing else, the weight of performance tradition for centuries has made certain *rāgas* seem more acceptable or fitting at their proper times of day. *Rāga Bhairava*, for instance, considered to have a serene and contemplative mood, is associated with the time of early morning and is the principle *rāga* of *Bhairava thāt* (Chart I). It is a *sampurna rāga*, meaning that all the seven notes are used. Similarly, *Todi*, a major *rāga* of mid-morning and the present *rāga* of *Todi thāt*, is also a *sampurna rāga*.

Jairazbhoy says: "The time specified for the performance of *rāgas* are only approximate and in practice there is considerable latitude. It does appear that this theory (Bhātkhande's) conforms in a large number of instances to the traditional time of performance of *rāgas*."

An interesting aspect of the time theory of performance was brought out to me in discussion with my guru, Devendra Murdheshwar, who always emphasizes the imagery of notes rising and setting with the sun. Thus, the transition between *rāgas* with a major and those with a minor third (and sharing their remaining scale steps) occurs as the evening deepens into night. This progression continues with the *rāgas* of *Asāvari thāt*, having the flattened sixth, coming next, then of *Bhairavi thāt*, with the flattened second, coming after that. Towards dawn, the direction reverses, as in *Bhairav*, where the third and seventh are again raised, following the imagery of the approaching dawn. This is certainly the most charming way of looking at the question, putting one in mind of wonderful all-night concerts where, indeed, one can hear the succession of melodies according to this scheme. The main difficulty presented by the time theory seems to be

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

practical, in that concerts usually can't be organized at enough different times of day and night to enable one to hear all the *rāgas* at their proper times. Considerable latitude and adjustment in this regard while retaining the broad format of the time theory is a convenient solution to this problem which is acceptable both to musicians as well as listeners. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Karnātaka Music: A Synoptic Survey

R. Sathyanarayana

1. Problems of Definition

The music of South India is called Karnātaka music. Like many familiar objects, this term eludes a precise and compact definition, despite numerous complementary methodological approaches. Multiple chronological stratification with considerable overlap weakens the attempt to relate it historically to epochs of origin, development or culmination. It may not even be geographically delimited to the southern peninsula for a large territory of this peninsula is also the home of Hindustāni music, e.g. Maharashtra. Indeed, Karnataka is the only Indian State in which both Karnātaka music and Hindustāni music flourish equally well. Also, Karnātaka music is now widely diffused in north India. To define it through a comparative method by delineating similarities and dissimilarities with cognate systems such as Hindustāni music would be only descriptive and not definitive, if not *petitio principii*. At any rate, it would require resolution of many yet intangible factors such as affective and aesthetic differentiation as well as collimation of techniques and treatment of corresponding or similar empirical material. This is why a semantic approach would remain, in the present state, barren.

Again, Karnātaka music cannot be defined in terms of content. For if content is understood as the totality of compositional forms employed, these are largely transient. Many have passed into oblivion or obsolescence, while yet others have drastically metamorphosed over the centuries. If 'content' means the matrix of principles and practice, the secondary frame of empirico-descriptive flux inexorably keeps on changing against a more or less fixed primary frame of fundamental, foundational or formative concepts both autonomous and heternomous to music. A linguistic definition or demarcation is equally unsatisfactory because the word 'content' in Karnātaka music is largely extraneous or irrelevant to its musical autonomy and is but an extramusical dimension. Besides, it is composed and performed in all Dravidian languages and Samskrta. In its format, it is polyvalent as art music, religious or ritual music, traditional music, etc., with considerable and frequent exchange in form and content with folk music. Its forms are highly heterogeneous in musical and literary structure. Ethnically, it cannot be restricted to or defined by racial characterization.

Thus the nature of evolution of Karnātaka music admits more of an eclectic and comprehensive description than a precise and compact definition. A synoptic description of this system is attempted in this paper in a historical perspective.

Much of the foregoing considerations applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the definition of Hindustāni music also.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

2. Name

The art music practised in Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala is occasionally called South Indian music and, frequently, Karnātaka music. Notwithstanding the lexically unsupported claim that 'Karnatakam' in Tamil means traditional and/or pure, this adjectival term has a territorial dimension. Over the millennia, Karnataka has comprised large parts of south India at different times. This is especially true of the Vijayanagara empire which extended over large portions of the present Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala and was, in fact, called the Karnataka empire. This also coincided with a period which witnessed the development of the principles and practices which were both critical and crucial to the evolution of Karnātaka music into its present state. It is also a historical coincidence that these principles and practices, techniques and treatment, instrumentarium and ideation were influenced by musicians, composers and musicologists who hailed from Karnataka or migrated from Karnataka. This is by no means to deprecate or depreciate the great and immortal contributions of Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala which have made Karnātaka music what it is today.

Indeed, the name 'Karnātaka music' (and the name 'Hindustāni music') is very recent in origin and was not given by Karnataka or its people at all. A musical system is seldom given a territorially identifying name by its natives. It is just music to them, perhaps even 'the' music. It is only when the need arises to compare or describe one's own system in the context of another, or others, that territorially descriptive names are sought to be given such as European, Indian, Hindustāni Karnātaka etc., usually by the natives of the other systems.

There is a popular fallacious belief that Karnātaka music is ancient in both name and origin. This may now be laid to rest. Not a single reference to this name is found in the vast expanse of historical records, musical treatises, literary sources, etc. which are now available. In fact, the names Hindustāni music and Karnātaka music emerge only since about a hundred years. Their first available textual mention dates from only 1917.

A widely prevalent contemporary belief in Indian music is that the dichotomy of Indian music into the northern (Hindustāni) and the southern (Karnātaka) streams may be dated at about 1310 A.D. This was inaugurated by the late Prof. P. Sambamoorthy who stated[1] that the two systems are mentioned by Haripāladeva of the Seüna dynasty who ruled at Devagiri in about 1310 A.D. in his work *Sangītasudhākara*. He based his conclusion on the following extract:

देशे देशे प्रचरितं तत्सर्वं देशिसंमतम् ।
तदपि द्विविधं ज्ञेयं दक्षिणोत्तरभेदतः ॥
कर्णाटकं दक्षिणे स्यात् हिंदूस्थानी तथोत्तरे ।
हिंदूस्थानी प्रसिद्धं यद् गीतं यथा श्रुतम् ॥

This conclusion is wrong in every detail: The above passage is not found in the *Sangītasudhākara* of Haripāladeva. This Haripāladeva, author of *Sangītasudhākara,* is not a ruler of the Seüna dynasty of Devagiri but is a prince of the western Cālukyans of

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Kalyāni who flourished, not in the 14th century A.D. but in the last quarter of the 12th century A.D.

The above passage is found in a treatise called *Sangītasudhākara* authored by Kaśināth Apātulasi Paralikar[2] who wrote this short work in 1914 A.D.:

शालिवाहनशके षट्त्र्यष्टयैक आनंदसंवत्सरे।
मधुशुक्ल प्रतिपदि संपूर्णश्चिरमेधताम् ॥[3]

i.e. on the first day of the lunar month of Caitra of śaka 1836. This was published by his senior contemporary Vishnu (Nārāyana Bhātkhande) Sharma from the Aryabhushana Press in Poona in 1917.

This was followed by V.N. Bhātkhande himself when he wrote the *Śrīmallaksya-sangītam* under the pseudonym 'Catura'. This work was published by Sukthankar in Poona at the Aryabhushana Press in 1921.

प्रणाल्यौ तु प्रसिद्धे द्वे संगीतस्य विदां मते।
आद्या कर्णाटकी ख्याता हिंदूस्थानी परा तथा ॥
कर्णाटकप्रणाली या सा मद्रासनिबंधिनी।
अन्यत्र सर्वतो हिंदूस्थानी या बहुसंमता ॥

This was an amazingly ill-informed statement for Pandit Bhātkhande to make in 1921. According to him, Karnātaka music was confined to Madras while Hindustāni music flourished everywhere else in India. And he had travelled as far south as at least Mysore, where he conferred with eminent musicians of the royal court of Krishnarāja Wadiyar IV! Still, south India and South Indian music did not exist for him beyond Madras. There is no dearth, however, of European musicologists who suffered from similar myopia. To most of them Hindus meant north Indians, Hindustān meant north India and music meant Hindustāni music, with the exception of Fox Strangways and Herbert Popley. Some examples are: William Jones, *The Musical Modes of the Hindus* (1784), Augustus Willard, *A Treatise on the Music of the Hindus* (1834), J.D. Petersen, *On the Grāmas or Musical Scales of the Hindus,* William Stafford, *The Music of Hindustān or India,* J. Nathan, *Music of the Hindus.*

Thus it is the Europeans who gave the name 'Hindustāni music' to the music of north India, while it is probable that the name 'Karnātaka music' was given by Tamilians. They may have done so in order to distinguish it from their own ancient heritage of *pans* and *tevārams* and to mark the bequeathal from the Vijayanagara empire which included large territories of Tamil Nadu, especially Tanjore, which were initially ruled by persons of Karnataka extraction and under whose patronage the Kannadiga musicologists Govinda Dīksita and his son Venkatamakhin wrote the epoch-making treatises *Sangītasudhā* and *Caturdandiprakāśika,* both of which were the harbingers of modern Karnātaka music. Maharashtrian musicologists such as Kaśināth Apātulasi and V.N. Bhātkhande were inluenced by Tamilians and took up the nomenclature. These

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

names then diffused into Andhra and Karnataka through territorial contiguity.

3. Origins of Dichotomy

It is generally contended that Indian music was one integral art, being uniformly the same all over India till about a thousand years ago. A more or less single, uniform matrix of theory in both textual tradition and in operational and functional concepts both in north India and south India has largely sponsored this contention. It does not seem plausible that the music practised at the four extreme corners of so vast and varying a subcontinent as India could be identically the same. As a matter of fact, a continuous and contiguous transition in the character of Indian music may be readily perceived along three axes drawn from the southern tip of India to the northern, north-eastern and north-western extremities at all times, even today. Such progressive ethnic and cultural variation is a basic anthropological axiom in any large community. India is no exception. Notwithstanding the very small increment and continuity in variation, the end results in so vast an axis would indeed be noticeably dissimilar. However, similarity or identity in cultural values must have conferred some degree of internal logical coherence and formal coherence on the practice of this art throughout the country. These two coherences were further promoted by the fact that the differentiating and distinguishing feature of Indian music is the quadrology of *rāga, tāla, prabandha* and *vādya*. This naturally admitted a uniform methodology and technique as well as a uniform general theoretical treatment. There are few, if any at all, musicological treatises in India which depict the music of only a single province of a given period to the exclusion of music elsewhere. They are, by and large, eclectic collections and assimilations of musical and musicological data in time and space. Every major treatise of Indian music does contain, however, indications of provincial contribution and variation. Samskṛta language has served as an instrument of integration in India from the earliest times. It has done so again in Indian musicology.

The emergence of Indian music in the northern and southern streams may be traced to both external and internal stresses. During the Sultanate regime in Delhi, the rulers patronized brilliant musicians from Persia and Arabia. Later, the Mughal emperors attracted musical talent from such distant seats of musical excellence as Iran, Turkey, Transoxania, Tabriz, Oxus, Mongolia, etc. In consequence of such royal patronage and preference, influence of exotic cultures, interaction and admixture of musical styles, there emerged a new shape of music forged on the anvils of the royal courts of Delhi and of the Bahmani rulers of Bijapur. Such interdiffusion proceeded at three levels: creative material, theoretical core and empirical usage.

Internal stress constituted the strongest reason for such decisive change. Dual tonality, permutability of the lowest degree of the scale, omissibility of the first and fifth degrees of the octave, inflexibility and inviolability of prescriptions regarding the performance of ancient music, strict adherence to prescriptions because of ascribed indwelling of the seeds of music in the Vedas, inundation from tributaries of exotic and folk sources, etc. served as outer symptoms which proclaimed the imminent need for a morphic change in musical usage. Continued recession of established theoretical and

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

technical rules and conventions from actual practice, prolific generation of musical material outside the pale of theoretical conformity or sanction, the ageing inelasticity of classificatory schemes which became unable to contain such growth, inability of the *grāma-mūrchhanā-tāna-jāti* apparatus — foundational to ancient Indian music — to accommodate the overflow of new creative and theoretical upsurge from the effervesceing crucible of renaissance — these and similar circumstances became handposts for a morphic change in theory. It was during this period that basic transformations were taking place in the basic scale. The entirety of music came to be based on the lowest degree of the scale instead of on two tonics; intervals were flattened or sharpened to accord with contemporary usage; inevitability or nonomissibility of *madhyama* yielded to the invariance of *pañcama* as a result of which *pratimadhyama* (tritone) could be accommodated logically within the tonal organization of a single archetypal scale.

Karnātaka music commenced its emergence as a distinct entity from about the middle of the 14th century. By this time, Indian music was ripe enough to shed the burden of what was archaic, obsolete or redundant in concept and content and to mould into new ones with functional relevance and contemporary needs. The North and the South achieved this each in its characteristic way in keeping with its peculiar line of historical development. The reemergence of Indian music as Hindustāni music took the form of absorption and assimilation of alien and invasive influences, that is, the form of external logic. Exotic influences from far-off lands such as Ispahan, Tabriz, Transoxania, Hijaz, etc. poured into the crucible of change and fused. The musician and musicologist of north India, in the royal courts of sultans, Mughals and Hindu rulers poured this melt into a new cast the image of which was new, but still characteristically Indian. Renascence in the South was marked by reaction to internal stresses and the need to resolve self-generated tensions and reactionary trends. Thus the evolution of Karnātaka music largely flowed along the line of internal logic. As a consequence Hindustāni music retains traces of exotic impress even today while Karnātaka music still retains an authentic and traditional descent. The overall result for both systems was a new lease on life. Both streams flowed in different directions, with occasional confluences and sometimes on conceptually parallel beds. A notable difference is that in Hindustāni music evolution has occurred in more or less discontinuous conceptual changes and by individual genius and its schools while in Karnātaka music conceptual changes in both theory and practice were gradual, coherent in space and time, i.e. individual genius and enterprise became a logical extension or commentary on traditional heritage and were woven into a continuous pattern into the total fabric of spatiotemporal unity.

4. Transition

The sage Vidyāranya who inspired the founding of the Karnataka (Vijayanagara) empire also probably founded Karnātaka music in this empire. This does not mean that he created an entire musical system out of the void. It is simply that he recognized the trends, noted the elements which required buttressing and expansion; he revitalized the core and spirit of the system and provided both direction and leadership. The 13th and

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

14th centuries A.D. reveal a state of instability in the cultural history of south India marked by internal conflict, disorganization and inconsistency, lack of unity and direction. This period also underlined the need for collimating the scattered forces to a focus. This is reflected in the political, social, religious and cultural life of the people of this period, especially in music.

Śrī Vidyāranya was the spearhead of this renascence and brought order into chaos in south India. The melodic aspect of our music was in chaos, being torn between archaic, rigid prescription and permissive usage. Alien and exotic influences were also invading and inundating the hinterland of musical practice. In his *Sangītasāra*[4] he created the *mela* concept to replace the archaic *grāma* and its paraphernalia. This ushered in a new era through reorganization of the tonic, scalic temperament, synonymization of the trilogy, viz. key, tonality and modulation. This indeed formed a signpost on the path of evolution. Scalic reorganization soon paved the way for temperament of intervals, the standardization of the corpus of intervals in contemporary usage into twelve semitones, and their exact representation on four forms of scalic organization *(mela)* on the Vīnā. This naturally led to the concept of grouping of *rāgas*. Thus the seeds were sown for the development of the trilogy — *svaramela, vīnāmela* and *rāgamela* — in terms of which Karnātaka music was to evolve in the following centuries. Similar chaos had resulted in *tāla* by proliferation, same names with different structures, same structures with different names, use of the indeterminate pause *(virāma)*, variable size of the *laghu*, etc. This problem was solved by the Haridāsas of Karnataka who developed a simple, comprehensive and compact system of *tālas* in the 15th-16th centuries. The compositional forms, prolific in their 76 major structures and over three thousand sub-varieties, were also replaced by their present analogues by the Haridāsas, the great musical trinity, and a host of other composers hailing from Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

5. Evolution

Karnātaka music may be said to have emerged as a distinct entity when it developed an independent form and content. It was established in a distinct form from about the 14th century by developing a corpus of concepts and techniques to express them. This was achieved through innovation, by aligning it with the already existing framework of theory as its extension, expansion or modification. Whenever musical practice transgressed theoretical convention or prescription, the corresponding tenet in theory was subjected to a new exegesis by which it would be allowed to expand, extend or modify so as to include the new development. This technique is native to the genius of Indian culture and is found applied in every aspect of its civilization.

Thus a differentiating conceptual frame was developed with a supporting structure of technique for its expression; differentiating content was developed, on the other hand, through a corpus of compositional forms. Thus the origins of Karnātaka music are analyzable in terms of the quadrology, viz. *rāga, tāla, prabandha* and *vādya*. The first three are included in the principle of *caturdandī* (literally, four pillars), viz. *gīta, ālāpa, thāya* and *prabandha*. This principle was first enunciated by Gopālanāyaka of Karnataka

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

in the 14th century; it is a distinguishing feature of Karnātaka music and remained its guiding principle till about the 18th century.[5]

6. Rāga

All melodic content of Indian music, comprising the above *caturdandī*, stems from *rāga. Rāga* is a melodic situation which has a specific or characteristic (musical) expressiveness; it arises out of melodic movement. The specificity of its expressiveness accrues from the way that its tonal material is employed. The tonal material may be analyzed into ten vital characteristics *(prānas)* such as the notes of attack, rest, initial and medial pauses, recurrence and nonrecurrence, range in the upper and lower registers, specified note-affinities, *gamaka,* etc. The earliest available definition of rāga is found in Mātanga:

योऽसौ ध्वनिविशेषस्तु स्वरवर्णविभूषितः ।
रंजको जनचित्तानां स रागः कथितो बुधैः ॥[6]

The following elements in the definition are of special interest: The *rāga* has aesthetic appeal (rañjaka) for (common) people *(jana)* and not the elite. It is a special kind of sound *(dhvani-viśesa),* i.e. sound other than one employed for transactional or communicative purpose; sound which is not normally found (organized) in the referential world, but is abstracted, idealized or refined into a musical symbol. Thus the singing voice is different from the speaking voice or voice used for communication or nonaesthetic expression; sounds of musical instruments are different from those of the phenomenal world. *Dhvani* means suggestiveness in poetry; it is *sui generis;* it is exclusively a poetic function of language. It illumines latent and implied meaning lying behind *prima facie* meaning. It is the total experience of *kāvya,* not an ingredient or component. It establishes *rasa-samvida* between the poet and *sahṛdaya.* Similarly, *dhvani* in *rāga* is expressiveness rather than expression. It suggests meanings (autonomous to music) which transcend those which are revealed by the mere sound sequence. Indeed, the *rāga* begins (because of *dhvani)* where the melodic structure and dynamics end. The specific aesthetic experience characteristic of a given *rāga* is generated by *dhvani* and is *sui generis. Dhvani* is the exclusively poetic function of nonverbal sound series in *rāga.* It is the total experience of the *rāga,* not an ingredient or component. In respect of the interaction between musician and *rāga*-listener, an interesting parallel may be noticed in a passage from Mātanga which also defines *rāga* thus:

स्वरवर्णविशेषेण ध्वनिभेदेन वा पुनः ।
रज्यते येन सच्चितं स रागः संमतः सताम् ।[7]

The terms 'sat' and 'satām' are synonymous with *'sahṛdaya',* i.e. an aesthetically susceptible listener. The term *'dhvani'* is employed by grammarians among other things to mean articulate sound, suggestible meaning and poetic meaning, containing the

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

suggestible element:

एवं घंटादिनिहृदिस्थानीयो अनुरणनात्मोपलक्षितो व्यंग्योऽर्थो ध्वनिरिति व्यवहृतः । इत्येष प्रकारोऽव्यक्त शब्दानामेव वर्तते । व्यक्तशब्दानां तथा श्रूयमाणा ये वर्णा नादशब्दवाच्या अन्त्यबुद्धिनिर्ग्राह्याः स्फोटाऽभिव्यञ्जकास्ते ध्वनिशब्देनोक्ताः । यथाह भगवान् स एव –

प्रत्ययैरनुपाख्येयैर्ग्रहणानुग्रहैस्तथा ।
ध्वनिप्रकाशिते शब्दे स्वरूपमवधार्यते ॥

इति । तेन व्यञ्जकौ शब्दार्थावपीह ध्वनिशब्देनोक्तौ ।

किञ्च वर्णेषु तावन्मात्रपरिमाणेष्वपि सत्सु, यथोक्तम्–

अल्पीयसापि यत्नेन शब्दमुच्चारितं मतिः ।
यदि वा नैव गृह्णाति वर्णं वा सकलं स्फुटम् ॥

इति । तेषु तावत्स्वेव श्रूयमाणेषु वक्तुर्योऽन्यो द्रुतविलंबितादि वृत्तिभेदात्मा प्रसिद्धाउच्चारणादि व्यापारादभ्यधिकः स ध्वनिरुक्तः यदाह स एव –

शब्दस्योर्ध्वमभिव्यक्तेर्वृत्तिभेदस्तु वैकृताः ।
ध्वनयः समुपोहन्ते स्फोटात्मा तैर्न भिद्यते ॥

इति ।[8]

The above passage contains the concept of articulate sound; when nonverbal, the expression of its meaning through *dhvani* may be regarded as *rāga*. The use of such sounds in varying durations such as *druta* and *vilambita* is of essential importance in *rāga* because, other things being equal, it is this variability which bestows multiplicity of possible expressions, each of them conferring specificity or individuality. The concept of *sphota* is readily extensible to *rāga* because, notwithstanding the inevitable temporal sequentiality of the semantic symbols *(svaras* in music, words in languages), the meaning of the whole may be perceived in a burst *(sphota)* only at the end of the final symbol; in other words, *dhvani* conveys the whole sense of the *rāga* in a burst and not in stages or phases, which at an empirical level are only a methodological necessity, technical parameters.

Again, the phrase *'svara-varna-vibhūsitah'* in the above definition merits attention. There is an apparent redundancy in this passage because *'varna'*, the act of singing melodic phrases, includes 'svara'. It is not so; for *'svara'* here indicates the primary aesthetic appeal which it affords in its own autonomy. This includes those elements of a musical note which contribute to its rañjakatva, e.g. *snigdhatā, anuranana, śrutyanantarabhāvitva, gamaka, dūraśrāvyatā,* etc. which constitute its psychoacoustic attributes. I designate these with the term 'sonemes' in analogy with the linguistic symbol, phoneme. Next, *'varna'* signifies melodic kinematics, i.e. the continuous locus of a moving sound. It is this sound which assumes the character and role of the ten vital characteristics, such as *graha, amśa, nyāsa,* etc. and elucidates the *rāgatva* of a *rāga*. This is why the *svara per se* and its movement, *varna,* are both included in the definition. Both have the power of beautification. Beauty is the *sine qua non* of all art. *'vibhūsitah'* thus

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

suggests this power of suggested meaning, i.e. beauty, and is thus a semantic dimension of *dhvani.*

The foregoing lengthy digression from the mainstream of this paper is relevant because three of the *caturdandī*, viz. *ālāpa, thāya* and *prabandha,* rest on the foundation of the first *dandī,* viz. *rāga,* in Karnātaka music.

7. Melodic apparatus: Intervals

Rāga inheres the scale. The scale is divided into seven primary steps or degrees called *svaras: sadja, risabha, gāndhāra, madhyama, pañcama, dhaivata* and *nisāda.* These are regarded in theory as having intervals which are made up of a fixed number of subdivisions called *śrutis.* Thus the seven notes have 22 *śrutis,* allocated thus: *sadja (sa)* (4), *risabha (ri)* (3), *gāndhāra (ga)* (2), *madhyama (ma)* (4), *pañcama (pa)* (4), dhaivata *(dha)* (3) and *nisāda* (2). These notes are defined as *śuddha* when they manifest on the 4th, 7th, 9th, 13th, 17th, 20th and 22nd *śruti* respectively. These became *vikṛta* (modified) in two ways: (1) by assuming an interval measured by a different number of *śrutis;* (2) by occupying a different *śruti* than the one of its *śuddha* position. Thus *sa* became *cyuta* when it manifested on the third *śruti* instead of the fourth; in this case, *ni* became *kaiśiki* by manifesting on the first instead of the 22nd *śruti.* Similarly *sa* was *'acyuta',* another modified form, when it manifested on the fourth *śruti* itself but *nisāda* occupied the second *śruti* to become *kākalī.* Thus in the first *sa* becomes *vikṛta* both because it occupied a different *śruti* and has a different interval, i.e. two *śrutis.* In the second, it becomes *vikṛta* even though it is still on the fourth *śruti* because it has only two *śrutis.* It may be noticed that the *sa* is allowed an interval of two or four *śrutis,* but not of three. Further, the first and second *śrutis* become common, or *sādhārana,* by this technique of modification. Hence this *was* called *ṣadja-ṣādhāṛana. Madhyama sādhārana* operated similarly. In the first technique, *ga* progressed (from the 9th) to the 10th *śruti* while *ma* regressed (from the 13th) to the 12th *śruti.* In the second, *ma* remained on the 13th *śruti* but *ga* occupied the 11th (i.e., the second *śruti* of *ma*), to become *'antara'.* Thus again the interval *ga-ma* could be only of two or four *śrutis* but never of three and the tenth and 11th *śrutis* were 'common' to both notes. *Ri* was *śuddha* if it was on the seventh *śruti* and *sadja* occupied the fourth *śruti.* It was *vikṛta* if it was (still) on the seventh *śruti* but *sadja* regressed to the third *śruti* (in *sadja sādhārana)* and thus had an interval of four, instead of three, *śrutis.* Similarly, *dhaivata* was reckoned *śuddha* if it occupied the 20th *śruti* and if *pañcama* was on the 17th *śruti;* it became *vikṛta* even if it was still on the 20th *śruti* but *pañcama* had regressed (as in *madhyama grāma)* to the 16th *śruti* and had thus itself become *vikṛta pañcama.*[9].

It may be noted in the foregoing that *svara-vikṛti* is reckoned in two *alternative* ways, viz. reckoning its position or distance from the lowest degree *(sa)* of the scale and reckoning it relative to the just precedent *svara.* This was scientific and committed to the *grāma-mūrchhanā* system but cumbersome. As will be seen presently this was thoroughly revised and reformed in the 15th-16th centuries. The *svaras* were regarded as generated by or from the *śrutis* which fulfilled two important theoretical purposes; they provided depth or interval, i.e. extensivity, to the *svara.* Secondly, each note was

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

regarded as the manifested maturity of a locus of a moving point of sound, cumulatively gathering musical expressiveness, progressively as it proceeded spirally upward through its *śrutis* and in doing so acquired different degrees and colour of expressiveness, thus acquiring the individual (musical) personality symbolized by the particular *svara*[10].

8. Melodic Apparatus: Grāma-Mūrchhanā-Tāna

The seven *svaras* were sequentially organized into a parent scale called *grāma* which epitomized all scalic concomitants such as *mūrchhanā, tāna,* etc., elements of melodic movement such as *varna* and *alamkāra,* and expressive potential such as *vādi,* etc.[11]. Three such parent exemplars or archetypal scales were postulated in ancient Indian music, viz. *sadja grāma, madhyama grāma* and *gāndhāra grāma.* They were so named because the respective notes determined the character of the entire melody body comprised by them; they constituted the initial, terminal and most frequent notes and served as nucleal centres to which the respective melody corpus naturally gravitated. The *gāndhāra grāma* became obsolete (and 'went to heaven') because its intervals became very much at variance with those of empirical usage. *Sadja grāma* was defined as the ordered intervallic arrangement in which the *svaras* occupied the above mentioned *śuddha* positions; the *madhyama grāma* differed from it in only one respect, viz. its *pañcama* occupied the 16th, not 17th *śruti.* This differentiating *śruti* was called *pramāna śruti.* By modal shift of tonic, that is, by rotating the same scale around each of the seven notes separately in ascent and descent, maintaining the same mutual intervallic relations, seven derived scales called *mūrchhanās* were obtained in each *grāma,* thus totalling 14. By omitting one of a few prescribed notes in each *mūrchhanā,* hexatonic scales called *sādava-tānas* were derived. By omitting the note causing *sādavatva* and its consonant note, pentatonic scales called *auduva-tānas* were obtained. Eighty four *tānas* were thus derived. The *mūrchhanā, sādava-tāna* and *auduva-tāna* were employed as theoretical apparatus to compare, derive or create *sampūrna* (heptatonic) *sādva* and *auduva rāgas* which were in vogue in contemporary music[12]. Besides these *śuddha tānas,* other permutations and combination of different numbers of notes were also systematically derived. They were called *kūta-tānas.* These served as devices in theory to compare melodic phrases in musical practice.

9. Rāga: Scalic Revolution

The beginnings of Karnātaka music are found in a conceptual metamorphosis in *rāga.* This may be traced to the obsolescence of *grāma.* The 14th century witnessed trends which culminated in the 15th century in which both *grāmas* fused into one parental archetype which retained the name of *sadja grāma* but not its paraphernalia. This merger was a *fait accompli* in the 16th century. The *sadja grāma* became the standard for definition, comparison and creation of melodic material. This also resulted in the gravitation of the entire corpus of melody uniformly to a unicentric focus, viz. the lowest note of the scale. This conferred an upward tendency on melodic movement.

Several changes inevitably followed from this. The choice of a single note — the lowest note — as the reference pitch *(ādhāra śruti*[13]*)* greatly modified the contours of

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

melody. *Madhyama* was no longer indestructible *(avināaśi)*[14]. i.e. nonomissible, in melodic structures; its nonomissibility arose from its determination and differentiation of the *grāma* in which the music was composed. Since there was no longer such a need, it yielded place to *pañcama* which now became *prakṛti* or invariable (i.e., without modification). These and other changes were followed by scalic temperament; musical intervals were realigned; *vikṛta pañcama* of *madhyama grāma* was incorporated as *prati (nidhi) madhyama* into *sadja grāma* by regressing it to the 15th *śruti. Risabha* and *dhaivata* became *vikṛta* by assuming four *śrutis* each: *antara gāndhāra* and *kākali nisāda* now possessed each an interval of five, not four, *śrutis* and occupied respectively the 12th and third *śrutis* instead of the tenth and second. The tritone, now called *pratinidhi madhyama* had an interval of six *śrutis.* Similarly, *sādhārana gāndhāra* occupied the tenth *śruti* (with three *śrutis* and with no regression of *madhyama* to the 12th *śruti); kaiśiki nisāda* was similarly an interval of three, not two, *śrutis* occupying the first *śruti* and no longer required *sadja* to occupy the third *śruti,* so that *sadja* and *madhyama* could now have an interval of three *śrutis* each, which was previously proscribed[15]. The maximum size of an interval was raised from four to six *śrutis,* and the minimum reduced from two *śrutis* to one.

A major breakthrough in the development of the melodic structure in Karnātaka music occurred in the full exploitation of the denominational potential of a musical note in terms of contextual extension. This was achieved through two principles, viz. alternative denomination *(paryāya tattva)* and representative expression *(pratinidhi tattva).* According to the former, the same given degree of pitch *(svarasthāna)* could assume the character of a precedent or subsequent note depending on the context. For example, the note on the ninth *śruti* functions as *(pañcaśruti) risabha* if the next lower degree is *sadja* and the next higher degree is *gāndhāra.* But the same would function as *śuddha gāndhāra* if the immediately precedent note is *risabha* (seventh *śruti)* and the immediately following note is *madhyama* (13th or 15th *śruti).* Thus the vocabulary of melodic expression is thus considerably enlarged, viz. 16 denominations for 12 *svarasthānas.* According to the latter, a given degree of pitch in the scale could substitute for a theoretically or conventionally prescribed but empirically obsolete note, e.g. ancient *antara gāndhāra* was replaced by a note newly named *cyuta-madhyama-gāndhāra* (12th *śruti),* so named because it acquired the denomination of *gāndhāra* at the position of the (ancient) *cyutamadhyama.* The latter represented the former. This principle ingeniously replaced the deadwood[16] of the ancient *antara gāndhāra* and *kākalī nisāda* which were prescribed to be used very sparingly [17]. This change was in transit during Puṇḍarika Vitthala's and Rāmāmātya's time when both positions of these notes were in use[18] but later, during the time of Venkatamakhin[19] and Tulaja[20] these representations came to be firmly accepted.

10. Rāga Classification

Another revolutionary change which helped to crystallize Karnātaka music into its modern form is innovation in rāga classification. The cumbersome *grāma* apparatus was completely replaced by schemes which were erected on sound, rational,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

psychophysical bases. The schemes of anga (*rāgānga-upānga-bhāsānga-kriyānga), varjya (auduva-sādava)* and *vakra* (irregular sequence in ascent, descent, or both), new concepts in classifying *rāgas*, operated effectively to define different degrees of physical similarity with a given exemplar or model[21]. These are operative even today. Degree of fitness for composing the *caturdandī* was also adopted as a basis for classifying *rāgas* into good *(uttama),* middling *(madhyama)* and poor *(adhama),* but could not survive the test of time[22].

But by far the most productive scheme of *rāga* classification was derived from Vidyāranya's *mela* concept. He divided all extant *rāgas* into groups *(mela),* such that the members of any given group bore physically similar (i.e. intervallic) structures and meterials and each group differed from the rest. The most typical, representative or leading *rāga* from each *mela* was chosen so that it had all the seven notes (in ascent, descent or both or *in toto)* and was designated the *melakartā* (group maker) and the respective group was defined as being contained in this *mela:* the *mela* was defined as the ordered arrangement of the seven notes. The *mela* possessed no character of the *rāga,* but could, when the ten vital characteristics were judiciously bestowed, become a *rāga* also. This scheme directly inspired into existence the *samsthāna* or *thāta* scheme of classification inaugurated by Hṛdayanārāyana in his *Hṛdayakautuka* and *Hṛdayaprakāśa* and followed by Locana in his *Rāgataramgini* in Hindustāni music. Vidyāranya's *mela* concept was worked in detail in the 16th and 17th centuries. In Rāmāmātya's and Poluri Govinda's time this was firmly engendered in both theory and practice. In fact, Puṇḍarika Vitthala proposes a highly logical, practicable and adequate mathematical scheme of deriving 90 *melas,* while Somanātha derives a comprehensive scheme of 960 melas based on the permutation of *svarasthānas*[23]. Both schemes employ the principles of *paryāya and pratinidhi* explained above. Venkatāmakhin employed the same principles and derived the scheme of 72 *melas*[24]. Owing to the purely historical accident that Puṇḍarika Vitthala and Somanātha expounded their schemes in places in which not Karnātaka music but Hindustāni music prevailed and the Venkatamakhin scheme was adopted by the Musical Trinity and their schools, the latter became enduring and is now firmly established as an indivisible and indispensable part of Karnātaka music.

An interesting attempt was made in ancient Indian music to establish theoretical, comparative standards in the form of generalized melodic frames called *jātis.* A *jāti* was defined in terms of the physical concomitants of melodic expression such as the vital characteristics of *rāga* mentioned above. Seven pure and 11 modified *jātis* were described by Bharata and Dattila for this purpose. By manipulating the elements of melodic expression by permutation, the frames were generalized and it was possible to comprehend several *rāgas* at once in a single *jāti* The *mela* concept was augmented by other associated concepts and slowly but inexorably evolved into its present status. It originated as an organization of all the seven notes in a regular sequence; this was realized in the form of *rāga (*the *melakarta)* such that it was sufficient if the *āroha* (ascent) plus the *avaroha* (descent) together had all the seven notes; but it was not necessary to have all seven notes in ascent and in descent separately. The second significant development came in the 18th century when concensus of musicological

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

thought required that *rāga* forming the *mela* should be both *avakrasampūrna* and *rāgānga. Melakarta* and its derivative *rāga* are at present related as progenitor *(janaka)* and progeny *(janya)*. This was inaugurated in the 16th century by Pundarīka Vitthala[25] and was revived by a group of musicological treatises, e.g. *Rāgalaksanam* (anonymous), *Sangītaratnākara* (anonymous, Kannada), *Samgrahacūdamani* (Govindācārya), *Sangītasāra samgrahamu* (Tiruvenkatakavi) and others in the 18th century. All *rāgas* are derived today from the respective *melakartas* in terms of the intervallic material employed; according to the number of notes employed, a *rāga* is classified as pentatonic *(auduva)*, hexatonic *(sādava)* and heptatonic *(sampūrna)*. A *rāga* is classified as *avakra* if it has not prescribed curved phrases in its melodic movement and as *vakra* if it has. *Rāgas* are further classified on the criterion of their intervalic affiliation with the exemplar *melakarta*. A *janya rāga* is defined as *upānga* if it does not employ any note which is not found in its parent *melakarta*. If it does, it is *bhāsānga*, thus seeking to incorporate a shade of expressiveness which is not native to its *mela*. *Kriyānga rāga* possesses an action-evoking affective content.

Karnātaka music has several *rāgas* of which two or more bear a close similarity, or even identity, in their scales. The differences in their musical personalities arise because of differences in the treatment or differentiated by difference in *amśa* (or *jīva*) *svaras*, special *sañcāras* (melodic phrases), same notes treated to different *gamakas*, peculiar phraseology, limitation to particular registers, special affinities between two or more notes, difference in *nyāsa svara*, difference in the degree of strength or weakness of the same or corresponding notes, etc. There are few, if any, *miśra rāgas* in Karnātaka music even though they are found mentioned in mid 16th century by Nijaguna Śivayogi[26]. They are formed by inserting several *bhāsānga* (accidental) *svaras* and specific curvatures, e.g. *Ahiri*. They differ from *miśra rāgas* of Hindustāni music in one important respect: specificity of phrase, curvature or *bhāsānga svara* in such *rāgas* is not associated with this or that *rāga* as a component as is done in their Hindustāni analogues. That is, they are not regarded as composed of *avayava-rāgas* but as single wholes. Perhaps they should be called *samkīrna rāgas*.

11. Mutual Influence: Family Classification

The two streams of Indian music confluence again and again, draw mutual succour and flow in augmented vigour again in their own separate courses. Three such instances may be noted in the context of *rāga :* family classification, deification or iconification and *rāgavelā* (appropriate times for rendering *rāgas)*. Some of the earliest mentions or applications of these are found anterior to the dichotomization of Indian music and some in the environment of Karnātaka music; these were operative in the practice of Karnataka music for a comparatively short time but migrated to the North and entrenched themsleves firmly in Hindustāni music from about the 16th century till the beginnings of the 20th century. Rāgavelā is still a strong force in today's Hindustāni music. Because of the influence they exerted on Hindustāni music, their emergence and history in Karnātaka music will be briefly examined here.

The system of classifying *rāga* on the criterion of similarity or proximity of aesthetic

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

import (*bhāva*) is as ancient as *grāma-rāgas* and is coeval with them. This means that the intervallic content of *rāgas* derived from, or otherwise related to, an archetypal *rāga* often differed from one another. Besides, ancient authorities of the pre-Matanga era such as Śārdūla, Yāstika, Durgāśakti and Kaśyapa have named *rāga* in both masculine and femnine gender. Such usage continues uninterrupted in both Hindustāni and Karnātaka music.

However, an explicit division of *rāga* into male and female appears in Indian music as late as the 14th century. These references are found in poetry written in Kannada and Telugu. The first such literary source is *Basavapurānamu* of Pālkuriki Somanātha[27] (c. 1300 A.C.) where *purusa* and *strī rāga* are mentioned. This is confirmed in his *Panditārādhya caritramu*[28] which also mentions *napumsaka* (neuter) *rāgas*. *Padmanānka*[29] also mentions *strī* and *purusa rāga*. Bhīmakavi[30] (c. 1400 A.C.) also does so. Nijaguna Śivayogi[31] (c. 1550 A.C.) has mentioned a more eleborate scheme of classification for 144 *rāgas* in his *Vivekacintāmani* in which there are eight major *rāgas* of which one is neuter and each of the remaining seven are purusa ragas; each *purusa* has a family of four wives: of these 36, each has three servant maids (*dāsī*). Such gender taxonomy or family classification is treated elaborately in several music treatises from south India or south Indians migrating to regions where Hindustāni music flourished. Some of these are Pundarika Vitthala's *Rāgamālā* and *Nartananirnaya* (1550-1600 A.C.), Catura Dāmodara's *Sangītādarpanam* (c. 1609 A.D.), Gandharvarāja's *Rāgaratnākara* (17th century), *Sakalamata* extracted by Cikkaabhūpāla in *Abhinava Bharatasārasangraha* (before 1650), *Mahābharata cūdāmani* (18th century), Nārada's *Catvārimśacchatarāganirūpanam* (c. 1720), Tulaja's *Sangītasārāmṛta* (c. 1730), Krishnaraja Wadiyar's (III) *Śrī Tattvanidhi* (c. 1830). Such family classification, based on nonintervallic affiliations, such as affective or aesthetic, was adopted in Hindustāni music with gusto from the 16th century and was a strong musicological force till the beginning of the present century when it was completely replaced by *thāta* classification.

12. Mutual Influence: Rāga Iconification

In a sense, the gender classification into male, female or neuter *rāgas* or family classification into husband, wife, son, daughter-in-law and servant-maid *rāgas* is natural, logical and suitable to an art form like music. For it is an art in which *rasa* is experienced in terms of nonconcrete forms of beauty, as a shadow of referential experience, a semblance of phenomenal analogue. Abstraction of the concrete and concretization of the qualititative and quantification of the qualitative are fundamental traits of the human mind; they manifest in all aspects of individual and collective behaviour of mankind in its civilization and culture. The elements of beauty and emotion in a *rāga* generate an experience which is intimate, immediate, direct, and is an activation of a mental (sometimes behavioural) process. Response to such physical (auditory) stimuli may be stratified into behavioural, affective, intellectual and (aesthetically) transcendental. When the response in the affective or emotional layer reaches culmination—a boiling point, as it were—there arises a discontent with the expressional mode—its symbolic material and its technique. Consequent upon this is born a tendency

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

which eventually intensifies into conscious desire to translate, transpose or transform this experience in a different imagery, different symbolification and different techniques, to extend the experience received through one sensory agency into other sensory agencies also.

This may be called *vikalpābhivyaktivrtti* (tendency or activation to alternative, supplemental or complemental mode of expression). The more subjective this is, the more detailed the translation, transposition or transformation, the lesser becomes the effectiveness of the alternative mode as also the efficiency and degree of communciation. *Rāga* iconification may be therefore regarded as an endeavour to translate, transpose or transform an experience lying in one sensory (aural) area into another (visual) through conceptual and imagery association in a creative context. Such an endeavour may appear at a conscious or subconscious level. It manifests at the subconscious level in rare instances in human beings as an intersensory modality of experience, expression or communication and is called *synaesthesia.* I have discussed this at some length in my critical introduction to my forthcoming *editio princeps* of Gandharvarāja's *Rāgaratnākara.*

These two branches of *rāga* classification are basic facets of the musician's creative mind. Of these, the one based on physical, e.g. intervallic, similarity or affiliation is critical, analytical and extrovert in endeavour. The other, based on similitude of aesthetic import, is imaginative, contemplative, synthesizing and introvert in endeavour. The first is a disciplinic or *sāstric* approach and the second a creative one. Most authors choose one or the other in describing *rāgas;* there is no dearth, however, of authors who employ both schemes. Puṇḍarīka Viṭṭhala, Polūri Govinda, Cikkabhūpāla, Somanāthā, Basavappanāyaka are some examples on hand.

Concretization and iconification have been used extensively in Indian music. Deification of *svaras* is elaborately treated in *Kohalamatam,* an unpublished work, as well as in Bṛhaddeśī, Bharatakalpalatāmañjaī and *Rasikajanamanollāsinī.* The principle of iconification was extended to *rāgas.* This is an endeavour of visualization of an aural experience; it is more meaningful and productive than iconifying mere musical elements such as *śruti* and *svara.* It is more readily acceptable than *tāla* iconification, fundamental in concept and general in theory. The underlying principle is more psychological and anthropological than aesthetic, for it engenders the tendency and endeavour of concretizing the abstract, clarifying the unclear, vivifying the inanimate, intellectualizing or ratiocinating an untranslatable experience, etc. It is natural to and characteristic of only the human mind. The adventure of describing the indescribable has also its share in this endeavour. The tendency to extend the dimensions of an experience by realizing it as an intersensory modality is a trait of the human mind.

Thus both *rāgamālā* paintings and contemplative texts seeking to iconify *rāgas* are available in both Karnātaka music and Hindustāni music from before the 16th century. It must be remembered that this is not merely a pictorial model of an aural experience but an instrument of personification, or of creating or expressing personality. *Rāga* is here regarded as a definite person. The chief objective of an iconifying contemplative verse (*dhyānaśloka)* or rāgamālā painting is to evoke a central mood of a person who is in

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

complete harmony with nature and his/her environment. Every person may be characterized with an underlying, enduring, dominant mental state *(sthāyi bhāva)* which differentiates him/her from all others and confers specificity and speciality.

Depending on time, environment and internal stimulatory factors, his/her mental state is in a continuous flux against the background of the above-mentioned enduring state. This flux may be designated *sañcāri bhāva.* Likewise every rāga may be considered to have a distinct, definite and special personality characterized by its intervallic content, *gamaka,* etc. as also its above-mentioned vital characteristics. The technique underlying *rāga* iconification is to build up an imagery on an anthropomorphic model. Therefore, it employs such apparatus, method, etc. of delineation and limning as are best suited to depict this central, enduring, dominant mental state *(sthāyi bhāva).* The image is then built up from symbolic material such as natural setting and environment, train of attendants, associates and their acts of service, posture, movement, vehicle, weapons, pet animals, colour, line, shading, costumery, jewellery and such other beautifying, emphasizing, or enhancing agents, etc. These may be regarded as *vibhāvas* (determinants, referential concomitants). *Bhāvas* (general mental states) and *anubhāvas* (consequent states) endow the *sāthāyibhāva* with emotivity. This frame is sufficiently capacious to be filled with *sañcāri bhāvas* (dynamic, fluctuating mental states). Contemplation of, and implict involvement with, the iconifying description or of the *rāgamālā* picture can induce inspiration or stimulate perception of the tributaries of *bhāvas* and *anubhāvas* as well as the mainstream of *sthāyi bhāva* at the sensory level in the expressive flow of *rāga* during its performance. For such aural and visual descriptions constitute the symbols of the primary and secondary components of the aesthetic personality of a *rāga.* When aural experience transcends to the contemplative or spiritual stratum, it is extrapolated on to another medium imaged as an emotive or aesthetic situation personalized and expressed as such with the aid of appropriate symbols, apparatus and techniques. When colour, line, light and shade and perspective are employed, the end product is a visual presentation called *rāgamālā* painting. In course of time this kind of painting acquired a distinct tradition and lineage; it then branched out into Rājputana, Mughal, Kāngra, Bengali and other styles. Rāgamālā paintings have secured a permanent niche in Indian painting and recognition in the comity of international painting.

Sudhākalaśā *(Sangītopanisat-sāroddhāra,* 1342 A.C.) is probably the first textual source to offer contemplative iconifying verses *(dhyānaślokas)* for *rāgas* and six each of their *bhasā-rāgas*[32]. For example, the *purusa rāga Sri* has reddish yellow *(gaura)* complexion, four faces, eight hands which carry the noose, lotus, book, goad, the fruit citrus medica *(bījapūra),* boon and vīnā. His vehicle is the swan. He is surrounded by brahmanas. *Bhāsā* in this work readily lends itself to be interpreted as *bhāryā* (female consort), for all the *bhāsās* are here feminine. Polūri Govinda Kavi (c. 1550 A.D. equates *purusa rāgas* with *adhama*[33]. Examples of south Indian texts dealing with *rāga* iconification are Pundarī Vitthala's *Rāgamālā* and *Nartananirnaya,* Srīkantha's *Rasakaumudī,* Dattila-Nārada's *Rāgasāgara,* Catura Dāmodara's *Sangītadarpanam,* Keladi Basavappa's *Śivatattvaratnākara,* Gandharva-rāja's *Rāgaratnākara,* Nārada's

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Catvārimśacchta-rāganirūpanam, Mummadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar's *Śri Attvanidhi,* Venkatasundarāsānī's *Rasikajanamanollasinī,* Annaji Sāstri's *Bharata-kalpalatā manjarī,* etc. Rāga iconification and deification originated of course as a cultural endeavour based on an aesthetic urge or psychological need. But it also developed religious or theological dimensions with spiritual overtones. In fact, Somanātha states explicitly that iconified *rāgas* also partake of divinity[34]. Śrikantha elevates *rāga* iconification to dogma: howsoever skilled a musician may be, he shall not obtain the direct and oblique fruits promised in *sangītsāstra* unless he/she contemplates these deities or icons; this is why the sages have composed the *dhyānaślokas*[35]. I have discussed rāga-family classification and raga inconification in Indian music at some length elsewhere[36]

13. Mutual Influence: Rāgavelā

In India, implicit in musical practice is a theory from very early times that a *rāga* is optimally effective when performed at a particular time of day or night or in a particular season. The following assumptions seem to be implicit in such *rāga-time* theory:

i. Human mental states bear a rhythmic correspondence, i.e., they recur periodically with biorhythm and with diurnal cycles and seasonal cycles.

ii. Such correspondence is general; it extends over a range of mental states and a range of time.

iii. A *rāga* is stimulated by a mental state in the listener. Such *rāga*-induced states bear a one-to-one correspondence with or approximate to the states mentioned in (i).

iv. The mental state experienced by a performer or listener as mentioned in (iii) in a range mentioned in (ii) becomes individuated by a process of personal emotive/affective association.

v. The quality of mental state mentioned in (iii) is related to the physical parameters of the *rāga* such as intervals, *gamaka,* the ten vital characteristics, etc.

vi. By manipulating the physical parameters of the *rāga,* it is possible to simulate or emphasize the semblance or shade of an emotive state (*rasa*) such as *vīra, karuna, śrngāra,* etc.

In accordance with this (*rāgavelā)* theory the period between two successive dawns is divided into eight watches (*yāma)* of three hours each; more broadly into forenoon (*pūrvāhna),* noon or midday (*madhyāhna*), afternoon (*aparāhna);* or the time may be simply indicated as dawn (*prabhāta),* evening (*sāyam), night (niśā/rātri); rāga* performance may be prescribed in respect of one of these; there are also *rāgas* which are fit to be performed at any time, i.e. at all times. Besides these narrow widths of time,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

longer periods such as particular season are also prescribed for performance of *rāgas*. Rāgamālā paintings conform to such time prescriptions, if any. Today there is a more or less rigorous conformity to this in Hindustāni music, largely by conventional sanction; for the theory still remains to be tested with systematic experiment and observation. This convention inheres a serious disadvantage, viz. *rāgas* which are prescribed to be performed late at night or very early morning are eroded from usage for lack of exposure. An elaborate *rāgavelā* theory relating performance time of *rāgas* to *svara-vikṛti (śuddha/komal)* has been formulated by Bhātkhande[37] and Karnad[38].

The theory of *rāgavelā* is a survival from the predichotomy period in Indian music for such time prescriptions are found in many major treatises of this period[39]. It prevailed widely in Karnātaka music also till relatively recently[40]. This is supported by numerous literary references in Kannada[41].

14. Tāla: Ancient Practice

Tāla is the substrate of sangīta, i.e. singing, instrumentation and dancing. As with many technical terms in Samskṛta in music, the grammatical technique of its derivation sheds light on its meaning. *Tāla* is derived from the root '*tal*' which means substrate *(pratisthā)*. It is transformed into *tāla* by elongating the vowel on the penultimate consonant. This is done by a technique called 'ghañ' which yields a masculine noun and also adds the sense of manifestation *(āvirbhāva)*. It is on this substrate that any musical or dance event is manifested. Any physical event may be defined in terms of spatiotemporal coordinates. Sound is a spatial phenomenon while rhythm is a temporal phenomenon. Any music or dance event may be precisely located within defined time limits with the help of *tāla*. It performs two functions; it measures out a composition in time; it establishes correspondences in various events occuring at a given moment. The first is accomplished through consecutivity and the second through simultaneity, both of which constitute the *modus operandi* of time.

Tāla is defined as *kāla* (time); it operates through a fixed span of time which is neither too long nor too short and which progresses continuously in a spiral. Each cycle is called *āvarta*. This is formed of a number of component structural units, each called 'anga' (literally, organ). Each *anga* commences with an accent (beat, *ghāta)*. The number of each *anga* and the order in which the *angas* occur are fixed in a *tāla*. The sum of the durations of all the *angas* is the *āvarta*. Each *tāla* differs from others in its *angas* in the *āvarta*.

In ancient India *sangīta (gīta, vādya* and *nrtta)* was classified into *mārga* and *deśī*. The *mārga* variety was discovered by the gods (and therefore flowed in a beginningless tradition), to be employed for spiritual or religious edification. The *deśī* form of these arts, on the other hand, was inspired by popular taste and changed from place to place and time to time. *Mārga gīta* consisted of *rāga, tāla* and *prabandha. Mārga rāgas* comprised the seven classes of the *grāma rāgas, bhāsā, vibhāsā* and *antarabhāsā rāgas* and *jātis. Mārga prabandhas* were *kambalas, kapālas,* the 14 *prakarana gītis* such as *madraka, sāma, ovenuka,* etc. *Mārga tālas* were five: *caccatputa, cācaputa, udghatta, ṣatpitāputraka* and *sampakvestāka.* They employed only three *angas—laghu, guru*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

and *pluta. Desī tālas* were born to cater to popular taste, and were created to fulfil the needs of current musical practice and according to the composer's taste. Besides the above three, they employed a pause, called *virāma,* of variable size whose duration was one half of the duration of the just precedent *anga,* to which it was appended.

The unit of *tāla* time was the *laghu.* Its value was defined as the time taken to utter contiguously the five short syllables *ka, ca, ta, ta* and *pa. Guru, pluta* and *nihśabda* had the duration of 2, 3 and 4 laghus respectively. They differed from each other in *kriyā, i.e.* the acts of performing them. *Druta* had the duration of two units of time. The *desī tālas* were further divided into many *jātis* such as *tryaśra, khanda, miśra, sankīrna, sankara, marma, bhanga, urupa,* etc.

15. Tāla Revolution

As in *rāga* and *prabandha,* the 15th-16th centuries were critical to the evolution of *tāla.* Undirected proliferation of empirical content, ossified archaisms, rigid prescriptions and conventions, ambiguity in both theory and practice, and heterogeniety led to much confusion, redundance, anachronism and anarchy of compactness, convenience and ready intelligibility; their values had grown variable and unstable; for example, *laghu* which determined the size of *guru, pluta* and *nihśabda,* developed a variable duration of 4, 5 and 6 short syllables. The size of the *virāma* therefore became indeterminate and led to very complex, fractional values for the *āvarta.* It grew to be a nuisance instead of being an expedient. Indefiniteness in the value of the *angas* led to redundancy: *tālas* with the same name differed in structure and span; *tālas* with the same structure and span had different names[42]. Construction of *tālas* came to be governed more by individual fancy and fantasy rather than aesthetic plausibility or pragmatic practicability. Mathematical rather than musical formulation determined the admittance of *desī tālas* into usage, also their prestige and acceptance. The acts and techniques of performing them had become cumbersome. Indefiniteness in foundational elements led to disruption of uniformity. Because *tāla* is the foundation, denominator, the very substrate of musical and dance practice, the latter were unsettled.

System and organization were brought into *tāla* theory at this time with the enunciation of *prāna* by Acyutarāya[43], who was probably inspired by Astāvadhāna Somanārya. The essential elements of this theory were already present but widely scattered and diffuse. These were collimated into ten vital characteristics *(daśa prānas)* in analogy with *rāga;* these not only described the *tāla* in all its aspects, but differentiated one from another. They were *kāla, kalā, mārga, kriyā, anga, graha, jāti, laya, yati* and *prastāra. Kāla* is the speed of performance. The first, second, third, etc. speeds are double the just precedent one. Kalā is the progressive expansion of the *āvarta* cycle by a factor of two, useful in accommodating given melody strucures into magnified time frames. *Kriyā* is the act of performing an *anga.* There are eight sounded *(saśabda)* and silent (*nihśabda*) *kriyās* which are again divided into *mārga* and *desī. Graha* is the position in the *āvarta* cycle at which the song or a part of it commences. It is *sama* if both *āvarta* and melody line commence together; it is *visama* if they do not. *Visama* is again of two kinds; in *anāgata,* the *āvarta* commences first and the melody line commences after

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

this; in *atīta,* the melody line precedes the beginning of the *āvarta. Mārga* is a *tāla prāna* which connotes difference in relative sizes of the steps which are needed to traverse the *āvarta* span and is of five kinds, viz. *citratama, citratara, citra, vārtika* and *daksina,* each of which is double the just precedent *mārga. Anga* is explained above. *Jāti* refers to the size of the *laghu;* it is *trisra, caturaśra, khanda, miśra* and *sankīrna* if it has 3, 4, 5, 7 or 9 units of time respectively. (Recently *laghus* of 11, 13, 15 and 17 units of time were also defined, but these have died a natural death.). *Laya* is tempo, i.e., the time interval between any two successive kriyās; it is *druta* if fast, *madhya* if middle, and *vilamba* if slow. This element has also suffered from overclassification into *druta madhya,* etc. *Yati* is the arrangement of *angas* into a regular or discernible pattern; it is *sama, viśama, srotovaha, gopuccha, mṛdanga, damaru, pipīlikā, kharjūra,* etc. Just like *laghu, guru,* and *pluta, prastāra* is a borrowal from prosody. it is one of six mathematical devices (*sat pratyaya*) for schematic tabulation of various aspects of *tāla.*

The Haridāsas of Karnataka brought order and system into the wilderness of *tāla* practice. They organized a compact and logically coherent *tāla* system in Karnātaka music. They revealed brilliant insight and musicological acumen by ushering in far reaching changes in the body of *tālas* without sacrificing historical continuity and internal logic. Among the revolutionary ideas and practices they initiated were: transformation of *virāma* into *anu (anu) druta,* an *anga* with the fixed duration of one unit of time (i.e., one half of *druta);* extension of the *jāti* concept to the *laghu;* restriction of the use of *anudruta* (only in *jhampā tāla)* to only one, of *druta* to a minimum of one and a maximum of two, of *laghu* to a minimum of one and maximum of three; exclusive use of only three *angas,* viz. *anudruta, druta* and *laghu;* transforming *druta virāma* into *trisrajāti laghu,* decomposing a *laghu virāma* into a *laghu* and *druta,* etc.

The revolution of *tāla* took the shape of reformation and restructuring rather than replacement or recreation. The Haridāsas selected *tāla* structures which were time-honoured but had specific and resricted usage. They transformed them into a compact and comprehensive system with consummate skill and with laudable parsimony in athetization, adaptation and generalization. These *tālas* were prescribed to be employed in a set of ancient musical forms, collectively called *sālagasūda prabandha.* There were eight songs in it and each employed a different, prescribed *tāla;* each had many varieties. The Haridāsas reduced it to a single *tālamālikā* composition and renamed it *sulādi.* They modified both the structure and *tāla;* they stabilized this transformed composition in musical practice by composing it in large numbers and propagating them through a variety of word themes such as orthodoxy, dogma, social, moral, ethical, spiritual and other values, to such effect that the *sulādi* has rightly come to be regarded as one of their special contribution to Karnātaka music[44].

The *sulādi tālas* were originally nine: *dhruva, mathya, rūpaka, jhampā, triputa, adda, eka, jhombada* and *ragana mathya.* These were invariably associated each with a *laghu* of particular *jati,* e.g. *jhampā* had a *misra jāti laghu; adda* (atta) had a *khanda jāti laghu.* These were *eka kalā tālas,* i.e., the time unit in each *anga* was telescoped into a single syllable, so that the *āvarta* could be shown by proximately placed *ghātas* (accent, beat). They are known as *chāpu tālas.* Only two of these, viz. *trisra triputa* and *trisra*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

rūpaka, have today survived as *miśra chāpu* and *khanda chāpu tālas* respectively, the adjectival terms indicating the total number of units in the *āvarta,* Musical exigency required the *āvarta,* and hence the *angas* to magnify into various sizes; this was accomplished through such devices as *kalā* and *mārga.* Further, when the *laghu jāti* was uniformly applied to all *tālas,* two events resulted: *ragana mathya tāla* merged into *caturaśra jāti mathya tāla;* the *jhombada* merged into *caturaśra triputa tāla,* popularly called *'ādi' tāla* by inverting the order of the *angas* in its *āvarta;* secondly, a total of 35 *tāla* varieties became available. A further device was developed, viz. each *tāla* unit in the *angas* of the *āvarta* was subdivided into 3, 4, 5, 7 or 9 equal parts; these were respectively called *triśra, caturaśra, khanda, miśra* and *sankīrna gatis,* which determined the gait of the melodic structures. Thus the subvarieties multiplied into 175. Sometimes an assertion that there are 175 *tālas* in Karnātaka music is encountered. It is incorrect to say so; there are only seven *tālas.* One other change also occurred in the *sulādi tālas:* in order to accommodate temporal values in music and dance, *dhruva* and *jhampā tālas* had evolved into *vīnādandi* and *nātyadandi* forms: the *laghuśekhara* (*laghuvirāma)* in the latter was decomposed into a *laghu* and a *druta* so that it became identical with the former.

The use of *sulādi tālas* became so exclusive that not only were the newly evolved musical forms set only in them, but even the ancient forms such as *śrivardhana, harsavardhana, pañcabhangi, umātilaka kaivāda, svarānka,* etc. also were composed in them from the 16th century.

16. Caturdandi

A major concept which distinguished Karnātaka music is that of *dandi* (literally, pillar). The entirety of musical practice was regarded as resting on four genres: *ālāpa, thā ya, gīta* and *prabandha.* These are the *caturdandi.* The trilogy or *rāga tāla* and *prabandha,* differences in treatment of which distinguish Karnātaka music from Hindustāni music, rests on *caturdandi.* These will be briefly described here with a cursory indication of their present state.

16–a. Ālāpa

Ālāpa is the extempore creation of a melodic personality in terms of tonal situations *(svarasandarbha)* which are comprehended in the scale and ten vital characteristics of a *rāga.* This is the acme of both Karnātaka music and of its creative genuis. This personality is delineated and limned on a canvas of broad and fairly elastic structural rules, grammar and idiom. It has been adequately systematized in early treatises.

Thus, an *ālāpa* is performed in six broad physical phases; *āksiptikā* (vulg. *āyitta)* manifests the emergence of the *rāga* in brief, introductory melodic passages, *rāga-vardhani* (vulg. *karana, edupu, yadupu)* elaborates or develops the *rāga* motifs; the *rāga* grows or increases in this phase. In other words, the *rāgavardhani* develops and sustains the body of the *rāga. Vidāñ* is the next phase in which the *rāgavardhani* is gradually and properly phased out. That is, it separates by suitable techniques the various paragraphs *(rāgavardhanis)* in the essay *(ālāpa).* Two *rāgavardhanis* are prescribed with their respective *vidāñ* while a third is optionally employed (with its *vidāri). Sthāyi* is the next

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

phase. Clusters of *tānas* blooming around a given note of the *rāga* are unfolded in *sthāyi*, both in ascent and descent, in the scheme of establishing the personality of the *rāga*. *Sthāyi* is performed on all *svaras* which are vital to the individuality of the *rāga*. In *vartanī* (vulg, *makarini)* clusters of *tānas* are built around other notes bringing it to a penultimate phase. *Muktāyi* is the final phase in which the *ālāpa* is brought to a close. It is the cadential part of the melodic structure of *rāga* and finally rests on the *nyāsa svara*. These phases are found illustrated in early treatises such as the *Sangītaratnākara* for the delineation of songs but were extrapolated to a more general canvas of *rāgālāpa* in the 17th century by Govinda Dīksita and Venkatamakhin[45].

Attempts were made early in Indian music in structuring *ālāpa* around tonal nuclei. Four such areas were recognized and designated *svasthānas*. The first was *sthāyi* which was also the *graha svara* or *amśa svara*. Melodic movement was executed around it and the notes preceding it in the lower register as also two notes above it in the scale, gravitating to the *sthāyi*. The second *svasthāna* was the fourth note from the *sthāyi* called *dvyardha*[46]. The *rāga* moved around this note, gravitated to it and paused on it (or on the *sthāyi)*. The third *svasthāna* was around the fifth, sixth and seventh notes from the *sthāyi*. They were called *ardhasthita* or ardhasvaras. The *rāga* was executed around these individually and collectively in a stepwise manner and paused on them (or on the *sthāyi)*. The final stage of the melodic dynamics was the eighth note *(dviguna svara)*. i.e. the *sthā yi* note itself in the higher register. *Rāga* moved around it and the notes above it and finally rested on the *sthāyi*. Then the *rāga* was established again *(rāgasthāpanā)* in short characteristic phrases, thus concluding the *rāgālāpa* on the *nyāsa svara*. Melodic movement was qualified with appropriate *gamakas* and with notes which were appropriate to the *rāga;* occasionally a note or notes which were omitted in the *rāga* normally were also permitted to be used if they helped in enhancing the beauty of *ālāpa* and emphasizing the melodic personality of the *rāga*. Melodic movement was also qualified with phrases which were special to the *rāga (viśeṣa sañcāras)* and vital or essential *(jīvasvara sañcāras)*. Such melodic kinetics of a *rāga* are described in terms of *svasthāna catustaya* by such early musicologists as Pārśvadeva, Śārngadeva, Someśvara, Moksadeva and Pundarika Vitthala[47].

As in many cultural values, south India has retained historical continuity in *ālāpa* also. The above methods of *rāgālāpa* are still traceable in Karnātaka music, albeit with some minor modifications. On the other hand, the method of developing a *rāga* in terms of *vādi* and *samvādi* notes is fully retained and zealously guarded in Hindustāni music rather than in Karnātaka music. *Rāgālapti* is met with but rarely in Hindutāni music in which *rūpakālapti* dominates.

16-b. Thāya

Thāya is the second member of the *caturdandi* and has no parallel in Hindustāni music. It is a phonetic deterioration of the Samskrta *sthāya* in vernacular usage. Pārśvadeva is probably the first author who uses *thaya* and *sthāya* synonymously.[48]. Ninety-six *sthāyas* and their subvarieties are described in musical treatises composed between the 12th and 17th centuries[49] for both voice and instruments. The term

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

originally cannoted merely the organ or segment (sañcāra) of a *rāga* but acquired a special restricted meaning in the 16th-17th centuries, when it was frozen into a separate musical form. The method of singing this is described for the first time by Venkatamakhin. Pundarika Vitthala describes only a few varieties of *thāya;* for Venkatamakhin, *thāya* is but one musical form. He devotes a separate chapter for its description: a *sthāyi* is sung on any note appropriate to a *rāgā* and a *tāna* is sung on each of the next four notes in conformity with the nature of the *rāga,* first in ascent and then in descent. Thus eight *tānas* are performed; next, any note in these eight *tānas* is made *sthāyi* and the melodic movement is executed in and round it and is finally rested on *mandrasadja.* This is called *makarini;* it is followed by *muktāyi,* i.e. the *finalé* of the *rāga.*

From the foregoing description the *thāya* appears to be a fragment of *ālāpa* involving *vartanī* and *muktāyi* such that the *vartanī* was rendered in a special way, viz. the *tānas* which were prescribed to be performed on various notes during the *sthāyi* phase are performed here and a *sthāyi* is executed on any note and the *mandrasadja* is made *nyāsā.* Karnātaka music does not today have this form, which needs to be restored. It seems to be replaced with another cognate form called *'tāna',* called also *'madhyamakāla'.* This is called *'kataka'* by Tulaja and is thus some 250 years old. Like *sthāya (thāya)* which acquired a restricted, technical meaning during the 17th century, *tāna* also acquired a similar, restricted, technical meaning to connote segments or organs of a *rāga* performed in rhythmic or prosodial patterns after *ālāpa* on the *vīnā* or before the rendering of *pallavi* composition.

16-c. Gīta

Gīta is the third *dandi.* It means generally anything which is sung, but acquired a special, restricted meaning in the 17th century to denote a *sulādi.* In modern parlance it denotes a simple – the simplest – song type to which the fresher student of Karnātaka music is introduced. In both senses *gīta* is a distinct contribution of the Haridāsas of Karnataka. Gīta is a *dandi* in the sense of *sulādi.* The *sulādi* as mentioned above was derived by them from *sālagasūda prabandha,* which was *niryukta,* i.e. prescribed in *rāga, tāla,* prosody, affective reaction, etc. They had numerous subvarieties. The role of the Haridāsas, led by Purandaradāsa, in evolving the *sulādi* has already been discussed above. The *sulādis* are performed only infrequently at the present day in Karnātaka music.

16-d. Prabandha

Prabandha is the fourth and final *dandi. Prabandha* (literally, construction) is any musical composition; it may be set to *tāla (nibaddha)* or not *(anibaddha).* It may have specific prescription in respect of *rāga, tāla, chandas* (metre), *rasa,* etc. *(niryukta)* or not *(aniryukta).* Its six organs are solmization *(svara),* word content *(pada),* onomatopeic instrumental sounds *(pāta),* laudatory address to the hero/patron/deity of the song *(biruda),* the auspicious (and *ālāpa* carrier) syllables *ta-na,* and *tāla.* A prabandha is classified *tārāvalī bhāvanī, dīpanī, ānandinī* or *medini* if it employs 2, 3, 4, 5 or all 6 of these *angas* (no *prabandha* is possible with only one *anga).* Its musical structure may be

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

analyzed thus: its introductory or beginning passage is *udgrāha;* the body of the song or its refrain is *dhruva;* a passage spanning these two is *melāpaka;* the concluding passage is called *ābhoga.* An optional passage bridging the *dhruva* and *ābhoga* is employed only in *sālagasūda prabandhas.* There were three kinds of *prabandhas: sūda, ālikrama* and *viprakīrna. Sūda* was a special group of *deśī* (vernacular) songs, again classified into *śuddha* and *sālaga* (samskrta *chāyālaga).* The ālikrama prabandhas had to be performed in a prescribed order by convention. Miscellaneous musical forms were grouped under *viprakīrna.* Seventy-six *prabandhas* are described with thousands of their subvarieties in early musical treatises.

A major difference between Hindustāni music and Karnātaka music is the historical discontinuity of the song forms in the former; the foregoing *prabandhas* were almost completely lost sight of from about the 15th–16th centuries in north India while many of them continued to be composed and performed in south India till about the 18th century. The old and new forms coexisted in Karnātaka music during the above transition period; some of the new forms were logical evolutions from the old forms; some were entirely new; but the forms in vogue contemporarily were left undescribed in musical treaties of the 16-18th centuries. The exemplar of the *krti, kīrtana, pada* and *jāvali* was the form created and proliferated by the Haridāsas from the 14h century. This was called *dāsara pada* or *devaranāma.* The *tillāna* has undoubtedly evolved from *kaivāda prabandha.* The *varna* was inaugurated by Govindasamayya and his brother Kūvanasāmayya, but its enduring influence came from Ādi-appayya in the 18th century. *Devaranāma, ugābhoga, sulādi, vrttanāma, nāmāvali,* the opera and many such forms were contributions of the Haridāsas.

Most of these forms received experimentation, inspiration, impetus and succour equally from Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The prototype of *krti* is found in the songs of Narahari Tīrtha in the 14th century, proliferated by the Ādya saints, Śripādarāja, Vyāsarāja, Vādirāja, Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa, Vijayadāsa, etc. from Karnataka, the Tāllapakam family, Vīrabhadrayya, Rāmadāsa, Sesha Ayyangār, Krsnasvāmayya etc. from Andhra, the great musical trinity (Tyāgarāja, Muddusvāmi Dīksita and Śyāmāśāstri) and their schools in Tamil Nadu, Svāti Tirunāl and his band of composers in Kerala. The *varna* grew into present state largely in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

While the age of Purandaradāsa, who is honoured as the Karnātaka sangītapitāmaha, witnessed the culmination of Karnātaka music in form and content, the age of the musical trinity marked its renaissance and emphasized its spiritual, ethical, and social values.

Telugu is the medium of word expression in Karnātaka music today. Samskrta has the second place of honour. The songs of Arunagirināthār, Kotiśvara Ayyar, Subrahmanya Bhāratī and such other great composers have given an important status to Tamil besides ancient *tevārams, tiruvāymoli* and the *pans* in which they were composed. *Varna, tillāna* and *pada* are composed almost exclusively in Telugu even now. *Jāvali* is available in Kannada, Telugu and Tamil. The compositions of Svāti Tirunāl and others have elevated Malayālam to a considerable position in musical expression.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

17. Musical Forms

What were the musical forms which were performed on various occasions in the past in Karnātaka music?

Clearly, these were the very songs which are described in early musicological treatises; there were *nibaddha* and *anibaddha* songs; *niryukta* and *aniryukta* songs; some of them were very short, e.g. *dvipadī, dvipathaka, tripadī, harsavardhana;* some were very long, e.g. *rāgakadamba, elā,* etc.; songs set to a single *tāla* and single *rāga;* some without *tāla;* some with *tāla* but with *gamakālapti* inserted; some musical forms were based on prosodial structures, e.g. *krauñcapada, hayalīlā, hamsalīā, satpadi,* etc. without *tāla;* some songs were set to a single rāga but to numerous *tālas* (i.e., *tālamālikā);* some were set to a single *tāla* but to several *rāgas,* e.g. *rāgārnava;* some *prabandhas* were *rāga-tāla-mālikās,* e.g. *tribhangī, pañcabhangī;* a few were composed in several *rāgas, tālas* and metres, e.g. *rāgakadamba.*

On a medieval concert platform were performed time-honoured forms like *elā,* literary forms such as *tripadī, satpadī, āryā, gāthā,* etc., songs which taught detachment and spiritual quest, e.g. *caryā;* songs such as *caccarī* for special festive occasions like the spring festival holī, etc.; songs like *dhavala* which were employed on auspicious occasions like weddings, victories, etc.; there were special songs for different religious sects such as the *mangala* and *mangalācāra,* folk songs the refrains of which ended on catchwords like *ovī, danī, dhollari, lollī,* etc. songs which inspired valour and patriotism such as *rāhadī, vīraśrī, kīrtidhavala,* etc. There were songs like *gadya* without segments, and songs like *bhramara, pañcatāleśvara* which were composed in many stanzas. Descriptive songs and narrative songs were sung. Forms which were set to *pātas* such as *kalvāda, pāta karana, pañcatāleśvara,* etc.

Songs were composed in Samskṛta and in the vernaculars such as Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Lāta. A special language called Bhāndīra was developed for songs in Karnātaka music. This was an *apabhramśa* form of Samskṛta which had developed its own grammar and idiom. It employed nonsensic syllables such as *tuma, kuma, aya, iya, tiya, voyi, re, amva,* etc. It was in vogue from the 12th to the 18th century. Songs of Bhoja, Someśvara, Vithalāmātya, Bhandāru Laksmīnārāyana, Venkatamantri, Vyāsarāja, Purandaradāsa, Venkatamakhin, Mudduvenkatamakhin, Paidāla Gurumūrti Śāstri, etc. composed in Bhāndīra language are still available.

Musical forms in vogue in modern Karnātaka music may now be briefly described.

17-a. Svarajati

All songs in Karnātaka music are segmented, with only a few exceptions. The *svarajati,* set to a single *rāga* and single *tāla,* has many stanzas, the first of which serves as refrain, *pallavi.* Each segment consists of solfa passages arranged in prosodial groupings called *jātis.* Occassionally words are set to the music such that note duration and syllabic duration coincide with each other *(yathāksara).* The words, if any, have devotional theme.

This form entered Karnātaka music in the first or second quarter of the 18th century. Hundreds of *svarajatis* composed by Syāmāśāstrī, Ādi-appayya, Svāti Tirunāl,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Ponnayya, Vadivel, Cinnikṛsnadāsa, Vīnā Śesanna, Mysore Sadāśivarao, etc. are available. These are largely propaedeutic in scope, but the three *svarajatis* composed by Śyāmāśāstrī are excellent songs and have high performance potential as the first song of a concert. A reciprocal song type called *jatisvara* is popular in Bharatanātyam.

17-b. Varna

The *varna* may be regarded as structurally bridging *svarajati* and *kṛti,* for its second half resembles the former and the first half resembles the latter. Its first half consists of three (or four) elements: the first is *pallavi* composed in two *āvarta* lengths; the *anupallavi* follows it and is of equal length. The third is optional and has an equal length and is called *upapallavi.* These are set to words of an erotic, laudatory or devotional theme. The melodylines are in slow tempo, replete with *gamakas,* such that the *rāga* personality is adequately brought out. In fact, *varna* is esteemed for the intimate familiarity with *rāga* it brings to its practitioner. The final line of words carries the composer's signature *(ankita).* The final element of the first half is a two-or four-*āvarta*-line solfa passage phased out into *jātis.* This half rests on the first line of the *pallavi.*

The second half commences with a single melodic line set to words. This is called *carana* or *ettugade.* The first half together with the *carana* completes its resemblance to kṛti. The *carana* is followed by three or four solfa passages called *ettugade svaras.* The density, phraseology and complexity of the *svaras* increase progressively to a climax in the final passage. The second half rests on *carana.* The *carana* is repeated after each *ettugade svara.* Occasionally, the *cittasvara* and *ettugade svaras* are also set to words. There are two kinds of *varnas: caukavarna* or *padavarna* is in slow tempo, the *cittasvara* and *ettugade svaras* are set to words and the entire literary theme is erotic. The *tāna varna* is in a somewhat faster tempo, has a devotional or laudatory theme, and is usually set to *āditāla.*

The *varna* seems to have commenced its career in the early 18th century. For, compositions of this genre from Vīnā Perumālayya, Ādi-appayya, Rāmasvāmi Dīksita, Pallavi Gopālayya, Laksmīkānta Mahārāja, Kāveripattanam Govindasvāmayya and Kūvanasāmayya, Sonti Venkatasubbayya and Sonti Venkataramanayya are available. *Varnas* composed by the Tanjore Quartet, Muddusvāmi Dīksita and Syāmāśāstri are also available. Other famous composers of *varna* include Svāti Tirunāl, Kulaśekhara Perumāl, Mānambucāvadi Venkatasubbayya, Parameśvara Bhāgavata, Vengu Bhāgavata, Karūru Devudayya, Vīnā Kuppayya, Tiruvārūru Ayyāsāmi, Pattanam Subrahmanya Ayyar, Rāmnād Śrīnivāsa Ayyangār, Tiruvotriyūr Tyāgayya, Vīnā Śeṣanna, Mysore Sadāśivarāo, Rudrapatnam Venkatarāmayya, etc.

17-c. Kṛti, etc.

The *kṛti, kīrtana, pada, jāvali* and *devaranāma* are all derived from the same *dhātu* examplar, viz. *pallavi, anupallavi, carana/s.* sometimes the *anupallavi* is absent; *caranas* are odd numbered, usually three. The final *carana* carries the composer's signature. The *caranas* are all set to the same music, except in a few instances, e.g. *pañcaratna kṛtis* of Tyāgarāja. The *kṛtis* of Muddusvāmi Dīksita do not have *anupallavi,* and have only one

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

carana; on the other hand, they contain *mātu-dhātu* passages in *madhyamakāla* inserted after the *pallavi* and *carana.* In most other kṛtis e.g. of Tyāgarāja if the *dhātus* of *pallavi, anupallavi* and first half of the *carana* are designated A, B and C, then the music of the *kṛti* may be shown as ABCB; occasionally it is ABAB; when *anupallavi* is absent, as in *divyanāma sankīrtana,* it is even A A A... The *kṛti* may be in slow (vilambita), middle *(madhya)* and rarely fast *(druta)* tempo. The *mātu* (word theme) of the *krti* or *devaranāma* may be praise of God, spiritual quest, moral or ethical exhortation, social reformation etc. The *pada* has the same musical structure and segmentation but always set in slow tempo and generally to *chāpu tāla;* the *mātu* is invariably an erotic theme consisting of the yearning of the lovelorn heroine *(nāyika)* for the hero *(nāyaka)* and *vice versa.* The *pada* is often interpreted in spiritual symbolism as representing the yearning of the individual soul for union with the universal soul. The *jāvali* has physical love of the hero for the heroine or *vice versa* for its word theme and is set to light, attractive *rāgas (rakti rāgas)* in contrast with *padas* which are set to *rāgas* evoking serious and deep moods. The *jāvalis* are also set to simple *tālas.* The composers of *kṛti, devaranāma, pada* and *jāvali* are too numerous to warrant separate mention. It is sufficient to say that they constitute the bulk of the compositional wealth of Karnātaka music and that the *kṛti* accounts for more than half of the content of an average concert.

17-d. Tillāna, Astapadi

The *tillāna* is composed in *pātas* set to a *rāga* and a *tāla* with brief solfa passages and word passages carrying the composer's signature at the end. The *mātu* is adulation, prayer, supplication or love, dedication to God or the hero or the patron. The *astapadi* is a song from the *Gītagovinda* of Jayadeva Sarasvati. It has a *pallavi* and *anupallavi* which is also the refrain and called *dhruvapada.* It has eight-couplet *caranas* (hence the name *astapadi),* the last of which bears the composer's signature. It has been adapted to the *rāgas* and *tālas* of Karnātaka music from about the early 18th century. It is usually prefaced with a preceding *śloka* which sets forth in a narration the context and background for the word theme in the *astapadi.* Rānā Khumbhakarna (15th century) standardized *astapadi* performance in north India; Tirumalapattanam Rāmudu Bhāgavata (18th century) inaugurated the performance of its modern version in Karnātaka music.

17-e. Daru, Pallavi, Śloka

'Daru' is a phonetic deterioration in vernacular of the Samskrta word *dhruvā* which is described by Bharatamuni[50] as a song performed in a play to carry forward the story by narration and *abhinaya* by various *dramatis personae* on various occasions. It was still used so till about 200 years ago. It is set to a single *rāga* and *tāla;* it is divided into *pallavi, anupallavi* (which is often absent), and three or five *caranas.* Sometimes there are eight *caranas,* when the *daru* is appropriately called *astaka. Darus* are performed for entry of a character, monologue, aside, dialogue, description, kolāta (stick-dance) and dance, etc. If the dance is inserted at the beginning of a *daru,* it is called *mukhajati;* it is called *makutajati* and *antyajati* if dance is performed at the end of a section or at the end of the

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

daru respectively.

Pallavi is a single-line melody set to one or more short word phrases or a brief sentence such that the syllables are rigidly fixed in span of one (rarely, two or more) *āvarta* of a (the same, or rarely different) *tāla* which is elaborated in terms of the expressive potential of *rāga* and *tāla,* as also the affective content, if any. It is the highest form of scholarship and spontaneous, creative imagination in Karnātaka music. It is prefaced by an elaborate and detailed *ālāpana* of the *rāga* to which the *pallavi* is set; this is followed by *tāna.* The *tāna* consists of clusters of musical phrases arranged in beautiful prosodial combinations. It is usually performed in a garland of *rāgas,* notably in a time-honoured set of five *rāgas,* viz. *Nāta, Gaula, Arabhi, Varāli* and *Śri* (collectively called *ghana-rāga-pañcaka).* When performed on the *Vinā* (to which it is specially appropriate), it may be followed by a *kṛti* in slow tempo instead of *pallavi.* The *pallavi* line is extended by *neravalu* and *kalpanā svara (vide* next section) in *rāgamalikā.* The *tāna* and *pallavi* are about 250 years old.

A *śloka* (verse) from *Rāmakarnāmṛtam, Kṛsnakarnāmṛtam, Mukundamālā stotra, Saundaryalahari, Amaruśataka,* etc. is usually performed at the end of a recital of Karnātaka music, usually in a garland of *rāgas,* but not set to a *tāla. Mangala* (literally, auspicious) is a song usually from Purandaradāsa (in Karnataka) or Tyāgarāja (in south India, including Karnataka) which is performed at the conclusion of a recital in a spirit of benediction. All the forms described in this section are also used in Bharatanātyam[51]

18. Creative and Decorative Elements

Every musical system characterizes and distinguishes itself by the elements of spontaneous creativity and decoration it evolves and employs within the frame of its compositional material. In Karnātaka music the performer not only interprets a song of the composer, but also enlarges its scope with his own composition, sometimes predetermined and sometimes spontaneous; such enlargement takes the form of commentary, extension, enrichment or embellishment of the ideation, affect, melody and rhythm given or intended by the composer in his song; thus he creates his own music, too. All this creation is extempore, a secondary creative imagination superimposed upon the primary creativity of the composer; its quality is a measure of the mood, receptivity and susceptibility to the composer's suggestion and ability of the performer.

Thus *rāgālāpana* prefaces the rendering of a song; it consists of purely spontaneous elaboration and development of melodic motifs as well as its affective and aesthetic content within the scope of a scale. It also provides an introduction to the song, a canvas on which to paint it, or a frame to contain it, a background on which it may be mounted and emphasized. *Tāna,* as already mentioned, consists of *ālāpana* of a *rāga* set to groupings of notes in various rhythmic patterns; it combines both rāga and rhythm in a manner which is unique in the world of music. *Kalpanā svara* is the weaving of *svara* patterns in different tempos, rhythms and gaits *(gatis)* in the given *tāla āvarta* so as to dovetail exactly into the point of commencement *(graha, edupu)* of the *mātu* in the *tāla āvarta. Neravalu* is the exposition of both *mātu* and *dhātū* occurring in a given segment

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

of the song in different but logically coherent, developed variations, moods and aesthetic forms. *Sangati* is the variation of a melodic theme in a given verbal context, developed progressively from simplicity to complexity; it involves increasing embellishment, *svara* density and melodic dynamics gradually. The foregoing elements are collectively designated *manodharma sangīta.*

Decorative elements are designed by the composer or performer to enhance the beauty of a composition by techniques and extensions judiciously applied. *Sangati* may be classified as both *manodharma sangītā* and decorative element. *Madhyamakāla sāhitya* is a *mātu* segment set in double speed, in taut cross-rhythms with dense syllabic population, unevenly distributed and inserted after the *anupallavi,* if any, or after the *pallavi* in its absence and after the *carana.* This was effectively employed by Muddusvāmi Dīksita and Śyāmāśāstri, probably for the first time. The *cittasvara* is a well balanced solfa passage added after the *carana* and is sometimes set to words also. The *mātu* may display segments in which a series of new words is formed by the progressive deletion of a syllable or by the progressive addition of a syllable. The former is called *gopuccha yati* and the latter *srotovaha yati.* Often, the *mātu* syllables coincide with the syllable symbolizing the *svara.* This is called *svarāksara.* The name of the *rāga* is sometimes (especially by Muddusvāmi Dīksita) ingeniously woven into the fabric of the *mātu* to form a natural and integral part of a larger word or phrase. This is called *rāgānkita.* The *cittasvara* or the *mātu* of a song may be composed to include clusters of *pātāksaras.* The *cittasvara* is sometimes so composed that it reads the same when reversed. This is called *anuloma-viloma svara* (e.g. 'Sadāvinatasādare' of Muddusvāmi Dīksita in *Revagupti rāga).* The *mātu* may be composed in a mixture of languages, especially Samskṛta, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu. It is called *manipravāla* (e.g. some songs of Svāti Tirunāl). The *mātu* may be densely decorated with alliteration and with the recurrence of similar or same phonetic community[52].

Most of the foregoing creative and decorative elements commenced their career in Karnātaka music about 250 years ago.

19. Instrumentation

The musical instruments used in a recital of Karnātaka music are chiefly the tambūra (ri), vīnā, gottuvādya, violin and mandolin among chordophones *(tatā),* flute, nāgasvaram, saxophone and clarionet among aerophones *(susira),* mṛdanga, khañjira, dhōlak, and tavil among the membranophones *(avanaddha, ānaddha, vitata),* the triangle, morsing, tāla, jalatarang and ghata among idiophones *(ghana).* The more important of these will be briefly described here.

19-a. Chordophones

Tambūra

The Tambūra (also called Tambūri, and in Hindustani music, Tānpurā) is the drone instrument in both Karnātaka music and Hindustāni music. It provides the reference pitch to which all the music is oriented and is therefore a prime instrument. It crystallized into a definite form and structure in the 14-15th century and is mentioned

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

for the first time by Śrīpādarāja (1404–1502), then by Vyāsarāja (1447–1539) and Purandaradāsa (1484–1564). This instrument is referred to as *dandige* by Kannada poets and Haridāsas. It consists of a hemispherical resonator of jackwood (or other wood) to which a long neck of the same wood is fixed. Four strings pass over a bridge placed on the plate of the resonator and over the neck and are fixed to pegs which are attached to a short tube shaped like, and placed beyond, the neck. They are tuned to *mandra pa, madhya sa, madhya sa* and (brass string) to *mandra sa.* Occasionally, there are additional strings tuned to other notes which emphasize the tonal structure of the *rāga* being performed. The first string is tuned to *mandra ma* in case of female voices or to obtain a higher reference pitch; or the latter Tambūra is made shorter to accommodate the same tuning but higher pitch.

Vīnā

The vīnā is one of the most ancient keyboard instruments of India. Its present form emerged from about the 18th century. Prior to this period, its keyboard was of two varieties; one in which the frets could be moved to different positions to give the notes of a desired *rāga,* another which had fixed frets for all the *svarasthanas* so that it could accommodate any and every *rāga.* Each was tuned in three different ways (accordatura) to give different ranges in the tonal continuum. As many as 33 kinds of vīnā were known even as late as the 16th century. The one now in exclusive use in Karnātaka music is called Sarasvati vīnā. It was inaugurated by Tulaja (c. 1730) under the name Tulajendramela Vīnā[53]. It consists of a hemispherical resonator of jackwood (or other suitable wood) to which is attached a neck bearing a keyboard carrying 24 brass or bronze (recently, even steel) frets. The neck has a gourd to serve as a prop near the end of the keyboard. A bridge made of ebony or jackwood is fixed at the centre of the plate on the resonator. The upper surface of the bridge has a steel and/or brass or bronze piece fixed to it with lac. Seven strings are looped into a small extension of the resonator plate. Four of these are passed over the bridge and across the frets and are fixed to four pegs fixed to a 'head' which is attached to the neck. The first two are of brass and are tuned respectively to *anumandra pa* and *mandra sa.* The other two are of steel and are tuned to *mandra pa* and *madhya sa.* The three other strings are of steel and pass over a side bridge (attached to the main bridge on the side of the performer) and on the side of the neck and are fixed to pegs provided on the side of the neck (nearest the performer). These are tuned to *madhya sa, madhya pa* and *tāra sa* from top to bottom. They are called *śruti* strings or *tipi* strings. Up to about 1900 A.D. the performing posture of the Vīnā corresponded to the resonator resting on the crossed legs of the squatting performer and the neck slanting along the left side of the chest and the prop gourd positioned at the left shoulder. The left fingers of the performer slid over the keyboard up and down while the right fingers plucked the strings near the bridge. But now the vīnā is positioned horizontally, the resonator resting on the ground near the right knee of crossed legs while the prop gourd rests on the left lap. The left forearm passes under the neck and the left fingers slide horizontally over the keyboard, stopping the strings at the desired fret by pressing it behind it with the tips of the forefinger and middle finger, and deflecting it

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

away from him along the fret to generate any desired note or its shade. The right forefinger and middle finger pluck the strings, while the right little finger (and rarely also the ring finger) pluck the *śruti* strings to mark the *angas* of the *tāla āvarta* and to mark rhythmic groupings or phraseology while performing *tāna.*

Gottuvādya

Gottuvādya is known since about 1620 since it is mentioned in Raghunāthā Nāyaka's *Śrngārasāvitri*[54] as gotivadya. The instrument is also known as Mahānātaka vīnā. Sambamoorthy claims a Tamil origin for its name Gottuvādya, deriving it from *kodu* (stick)[55]. It may be noticed, however, that a more plausible and probable derivation is available in Kannada: *gottu* means hard, completely dry. The instrument is not played with a stick, but with a hard, dry piece of wood called *gottu.* Alternatively, *gōtu* refers in Kannada to a technique of playing on the vīnā where the desired *gamaka* is obtained by horizontal movement of the finger along the string rather than deflecting the string. It may be noticed that this is exactly the way the instrument is played. The gottuvādya is identical with the vīnā in every way except that it has no keyboard and that the *svara* positions are obtained by stopping the plucked string at the appropriate position by pressing the *gottu* with the left hand. The *gottu* is made of a hard, dry wood such as rosewood or ebony.

Violin

In the form in which it is employed today in Indian music the violin is undoubtedly an importation from Europe. But it is not improbable that the European violin evolved from a form which was imported from India and entered Indian music in the 18th century.

Some fanciful surmises are offered in deriving or Sanskritizing the name. Thus Parur Sundaram Ayyar distorts the name to '*bāhulīna*' and associates it with Rāvana[56]. He claims that the first introduction of the violin into Karnātaka music was by Padmanābhadāsa Svāti Tirunāl who imported three violins which were played upon by the artists attached to the royal palace. Svāti Tirunāl ruled Travancore from 1829 to 1847 A.D. and presented one to Vadivel, a disciple of Muddusvāmi Dīksita and youngest of the Tanjore Quartet, in 1834. Sambamoorthy claims, on the other hand, that "In the history of South Indian music, Bālasvāmi Dīkshitar happens to be the first to receive systematic training in the technique of violin playing and so later to adopt it successfully for playing south Indian music" and that "while young he [Bālasvāmi Dīkshitar] accompanied his father to Manali (near Madras) and there he stayed for a number of years. It was there that Manali Chinnayya Mudaliyar engaged a European violinist to give him lessons in violin playing for three years." He admits that "He was born in the Parābhava year, Mithuna Ravi and Aśvini nakshatra, Kanyā lagna, corresponding to Wednesday, 21st June 1786"[57].

Both claims are untenable. For the earliest introduction of the violin into Indian music is much earlier, at least about 1760 A.D. This was in Śrīrangapattana, the then capital of Mysore in the royal court of Tīpu Sultan. A mural painting on the eastern wall of his palace Darya Daulat, dated 1784 A.D., contains a panel (fourth in the fourth row)

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

of young women one of whom is a dancer and others are musicians; one musician is playing on the violin in a form and posture which are modern. This instrument must have been in use for at least 25 years to have become popular enough for such pictorial representation and for use as accompaniment to a traditional dance. In any case, the painting itself, leave aside the first introduction of the instrument, was composed two years *before* Bālasvāmi Dīksita was born. It is clear that Haider (1761-82) or his son Tīpu (1782-89) introduced the instrument in his court as a result of his intimate alliance with the French. Further, in the wooden car *(ratha)* of Śrī Ranganātha of Śrīrangapattana, now stationed near the temple and consecrated in 1842 A.D., a carving shows a female violinist. Again a huge wall painting in the Jaganmohana Palace at Mysore, which authentically records the old customs and pageant of the *jambīsavāri* of Vijayadaśami in the Navarātri festival, shows a violinist among the musicians.

The architect of the modern violin was Antonio Stradivari (1644—1737) who perfected the instrument in about 1700 A.D. Its bow was perfected by Francoise (1747—1835) in about 1780. The construction of the violin involves about seventy separate parts requiring expert cutting and assembling. It is a hollow box usually 14 inches long. The upper half, called the table or belly, is made of a softwood like spruce; the back is made of hard wood, usually maple. Both back and top are arched and may be made of one piece or two pieces joined. The belly is the resonator and has two f-shaped holes, one on each side. The belly curves in at the middle. The top and back are joined by pieces known as ribs. An ebony fingerboard is fixed to the belly such that about half of it lies outside the belly. The fingerboard ends in an elevation called the nut which corresponds to the *meru* in the tambūra and the vīnā. To the nut is attached a peg box ending in a scroll. The box has four pegs to which the four strings are tied. A seven-stringed violin requires of course seven pegs, some of which may be screws. The neck, head, scroll and ribs are made of maple, like the back, while the fingerboard, nut, saddle and tailpiece are made of ebony. The four strings of the violin are stretched over a carefully fixed bridge of maple and are sounded by the friction of drawing a horsehair bow across them between the bridge and the finger-board, or by plucking or striking with the wood of the bow. The strings are attached to a tailpiece provided with screws to facilitate minor adjustments in tuning. The tailpiece is attached to an endpin at the top centre of the belly. The top left of the belly is usually supplied with a chin-rest. Inside the violin, the top, bottom, and corner blocks of the instrument as well as the sidelines add strength and stability to the structure. The top is supported by the bass bar and sound-post. The sound-post, usually made of spruce, stands upright just behind the right foot of the bridge and must be fixed exactly to the inside surface of the back and top. Its height, width, grain and location determine the quality of the violin tone. The bass bar supports the top against the heavy string pressure and also as an acoustical aid. The bow stick is generally round or octagonal. The hair is attached to the hatchet-faced head at one end, to the moveable nut called frog at the other end. A metal ferrule in the frog, secured by a small wedge, serves to spread out the hair and hold it in a firm ribbon. The nut is made of ebony, ivory or tortoise shell. The bow is tightened by turning a screw-cap which draws the nut back. The broader end of the bow is usually lapped with leather for better finger-

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

hold. The length of the bow is about 29.5 inches. The bow hair is selected from the strands of the tails of white horses and is about 25.5 inches. It is rubbed on a coat of resin to give it friction which produces the musical note on the strings[58].

The mandolin is a very recent addition to the instrumentarium of Karnātaka music. Only its accordatura and techniques are adapted to this music without any structural or acoustical modification. So it need not be discussed here.

19-b. Aerophones

Flute

The flute employed in classical Indian music is the single, transverse-blown type. It is a cylindrical tube of uniform bore closed at one end. It is made of various materials such as seasoned bamboo (Samskrta *venu,* hence the name), ebony, sandal, red sandal, ivory, iron, steel, copper, bronze, silver, gold and even synthetic plastic. It is called bānsurī in Hindustāni music (*vāmśa svarī-bāns surī-bānsurī*). The difference between the north Indian and south Indian varieties is of size and range. The former tend to the longer and bigger. The tone range, described in terms of low scale and high scale, is measured by the ratio of the diameter: length. The flute may be considered in three parts: the *head* in which the *mukharandhra* (embouchure, blowing hole) is situated about 0.75 inch from the stop; the *middle* in which there are no holes; the *foot* in which there are usually six, but sometimes seven to nine, holes, depending on the range required. All these and the embouchure occur in straight line, and the holes other than the embouchure are equally spaced out and are of the same approximate width. The first hole nearest the *mukharandhra* is called *tārarandhra* since this gives the highest note. The overall tone range of the flute depends on, and is usually expressed in terms of, the distance between the *mukharandhra* and the *tārarandhra.* Based on this, 14 types of flute have been described in ancient Indian musical treatises. The pressure and volume of air blown is a contributory factor in determining the pitch of the note produced. Overblowing produces the corresponding octave note. The flute covers ordinarily a range of 2.5 registers and corresponds in quality and range nearest to the human singing voice. By completely opening, partly opening and completely closing the holes, different notes may be obtained. *Gamakas* and different subtle shades of notes such as the illusory note, implied note, transient note, etc. may be produced by the appropirate movements of the fingers on and above the holes. The embouchure is placed on the chin so that half of it is covered by the underlip. The jet of air produced by the flutist must strike the other edge of the embouchure at its central point to produce a tone of optimum quality. Otherwise the tone quality will be bad and *apaśruti* (note/s displaced from their true positions) will result. The embouchure may be fractionally covered with bee's wax for correction and minor adjustments of fundamental pitch. Besides the above, the flute also has one or two vent holes on the side and/or underside to assist in fingering techniques and gamakas.

Nāgasvaram

Nāgasvaram is also called nādasvara wrongly, nāyanam in Tamil and vālaga in

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Kannada. It consists of a wooden tube of conical bore between 2 to 2.5 feet filled with a small metal bell at the bottom and a metal cap at the top. The bell also may be of the same wood. The cap is in the form of a staple and is fitted with a double reed. Spare reeds and an ivory bodkin to clean the reeds with are attached on a string to the instrument. The number of finger holes vary, but are generally seven or eight. Several vent holes are also provided at the rear or the side to control the pitch and for *gamaka* manipulation. The nāgasvaram is named variously, depending on its size. The largest of the family is Bāri (bhāri=big or large, in Dravidian languages) and the smaller is called Timiri. The ensembles employing these are respectively called periya (big) *mēla* in Tamil and *dodda mēla* in Kannada and *cinna* or *cikka* (small) *mēla*. Smaller ones are called Maurī (Samskṛta *madhukarī*). A very small variety is called *mukhavīnā*. The blowing is different from other aerophones. Since the reed is completely held in the mouth, no air is wasted; but the pitch variations are brought out also by variation in the volume of air intensity of blowing. The fingering techniques correspond to those obtaining in the flute. Rarely, a nāgasvaram made of stone may also be found. The drone for nāgasvaram is provided by the ottu, which is similar to, but longer than, the nāgasvaram but without the finger holes. It therefore gives a monotone which serves as the reference pitch. However, it is provided with a few vent holes at the bottom which may be fully or partially closed with wax to adjust the drone pitch exactly to the required value.

The saxophone and clarionet being exact borrowals from Western music, and retained without adaptation or modification in structure or acoustics, need not be described here.

Jalataranga

The Jalataranga is an idiophone but may be conveniently described here (since it is a *svaravādya* rather than *layavādya)* before proceeding to describe rhythm idiophones. It is said to have flourished in ancient times under the name Udaka-vādya (literally, water-instrument) but is a relatively recent addition to Karnātaka music, dating probably from about 150 years. Ahobala describes this instrument in his *Sangītapārijāta* (17th or 18th century). The jalataranga consists of 18 porcelain cups of progressively increasing volume. They are specially prepared to give a sonorous tone. The note is produced when the cup is struck with a light bamboo stick. The pitch produced is inversely proportional to the volume of water in (and size of) the cup and depends on the volume of air resonating over it. The cups are arranged in a semicircle before the performer who operates with both hands. The cups are filled with varying amounts of water. The water also helps in stabilizing the cup and in conferring continuity on the note. Further, various *gamakas* may be manipulated by bringing the stick into contact with the water surface. It also offers an easy and ready method of making slight adjustments in tuning. For the pitch may be diminished by adding water or raised by removing it. This also provides for tuning the same set of cups for different *rāgas* by adjusting the amount of water. That the instrument is not more popular than it is, is understandable because its tuning is both tedious and time-consuming. Further, the notes are largely discrete, thus

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

resulting in lack of coherence and intelligibility. Also the drastic limitation on *gamakas* is a serious handicap.

19-c. Membranophones

Mṛdanga

The leader of percussive instruments used for rhythm accompaniment is undoubtedly the mṛdanga. It is one of the most ancient of Indian musical instruments and its origin is buried deep in myth and legend. Mṛdanga means a body of clay; this indicates that it used to be made of clay in early times, as it is, occasionally, even now. The tone quality, the perfection in material and method of construction, the augmentation of rhythmic structure of song, the variety of sounds it can generate, etc. are peculiar only to this instrument; these are an impressive contribution to the world of music by Karnātaka music.

The Mṛdanga is a double-head drum. It is made of clay, jackwood, neem, acacia, red sandal, redwood, etc. It is hollow, broadest at about the middle, and tapers towards both ends. It is hollowed out of a single piece of wood and looks as if two unequal flower pots are attached face to face. It has, as already mentioned, two heads: the right head has three superimposed, concentric, tightly stretched skins. The outermost is a ring of calf skin. This is called *reppe* (eyelid) in Kannada and Telugu. It is also called *mītu*. The intermediate membrane, called *chāpu* (beat, stroke) is made of sheep skin or goatskin. A mixture of manganese dust, boiled rice and tamarind paste or fine iron dust and boiled rice is ground intimately layer after layer and fixed parmanently to the central circular region of the *chāpu* and allowed to form a homogeneous dry fixture, thickest at the centre and thinning out towards the edge. This mixture is called *karani* in Kannada and Telugu; it is called *sōru* or *marundu* in Tamil. This acoustically loads the membrane and is mostly responsible for the unique tone quality of the instrument, producing a radial overtone spectrum in the Baeyer Series. The paste of the above mixture is applied in small grains and is then rubbed and polished with a smooth, hard stone. The innermost membrane is of buffalo skin.

The left head consists of an outer ring of buffalo skin and an inner membrane of sheepskin. The central region of this is loaded with a thick aqueous paste of fine *soji* or of boiled rice and ashes. This is applied temporarily to the desired thickness (determined by the desired pitch) just before the performance and is scraped off after it. It should not be allowed to dry out during the performance. The pitch of the membrane is inversely proportional to the amount of the loading. The right head is tuned to the reference pitch and the left head to its octave note in the lower register. Each head has a leather hoop to which the membranes are fastened in 16 eyelets, with a thong of buffalo hide which tighten the hoops. The thong (*bāru*) is a single, continuous ribbon and is threaded into the eyelets of the left and right heads alternately and is tightly stretched across the body of the mṛdanga. Small, cylindrical, solid, wooden pieces *(gattas)* are wedged between the thong and the body in order to rasie or lower the pitch. If they are driven towards the head, tension in the thong and hence in the membrane rises; the pitch is consequently raised and *vice versa*. Minor adjustments in tuning are made by hitting the rim of eyelets

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

in the hoop at the appropriate place downwards with calculated force with a round, polished stone or small hammer to raise the pitch and upwards to lower it.

The mṛdanga is made in three sizes to accommodate different reference pitch ranges. Thus for male voices and low reference pitch, the belly or drum is 24 inches, 0.5 inch thick, and is divided into 11 inches of left segment and 13 inches of right segment—36 inches wide where they meet. The right head is 6.75 inches in diameter, the left head is 7.75 inches. For low female voices (and *śruti* "4-1/2") the above dimensions are retained except that each of the heads is shorter by one and a half inch in diameter. For low male voices and high female voices (*śruti* "5-1/2 — 6-1/2") the above dimensions are modified thus: the drum is 1/2 inch thick and 22-1/2 inches long, divided into 10-1/3 inches and 12 inches for the left and right heads respectively, 34 inches round where they meet. The right head is 6.25 inches in diameter and the left is 7.5 inches.

Dolāk and Tavil

The Dōlak and Tavil resemble the mṛdanga in that they are both double-headed percussives. The dōlak, also called *dhōlak,* has come into use in Karnātaka music recitals only in recent years as an auxiliary accompaniment and is thus elevated to the status of an art music instrument from that of a folk music instrument. It is a wooden cylindrical shell with hoops on both extremes which stretch buffalo skin or sheepskin membranes; these are tightened by cotton cords or ropes passing through circular metal rings on the middle of the shell. These rings are used in tuning. The heads are unloaded and are plain. The right head is played with the right fingers covered with calico, plaster cloth, etc. to protect them from damage and to give a brittle, discrete quality to the sound. The left head is played with a stick. The overall effect is a loud, guttural, brittle sound which offers an attractive contrast to the mellow sounds of the mṛdanga.

The tavil is used exclusively as sole percussive accompaniment to the nāgasvaram. Its loud, commanding tone is very appropriate to the nāgasvaram. A big ensemble may have two main nāgasvaram performers, one ottu, two tavils, one triangle player and one (hand) cymbal player. The unison, variation and eager, gapless repartee of the nā gasvaram players and the extraordinary sophistication, technique and scholarship as well as the dialogue between the tavil players has no parallel in any other musical system of the world.

The tavil is made of a single block of wood hollowed out into a cylinder 0.10 to 0.125 inch thick, tapering at both ends. Both ends have thick hoops of hemp over which the parchment is tautly stretched. The hoops are attached with leather thongs to the shell. Leather straps are also passed round the middle, interlaced with braces which may be tightened or loosened to tune the head to the desired pitch. The right head is played with the right fingers covered suitably as with the dōlak and the left head is played with a drumstick. Both heads are unloaded.

Khañjira

The Khañjira is undoubtedly a borrowal from Islam and is popular all over India as a folk music instrument. It has acquired a unique status and much popularity in Karnātaka

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

music for nearly 150 years. It is a single-head percussive consisting of a circular wooden frame about 3-4 inches wide and 8-9 inches in diameter, slightly tapering towards both rims. A lizard skin, usually of varanus (*uda* in Kannada), is tautly stretched on the frame. Its pitch may be slightly lowered by dampening the under surface of the skin with traces of water and may be slightly raised by warming the head. The frame is provided with three or four slits carrying jingle-plates or small dance bells which produce a pleasant jingle or tinkle with the rhythm. The khañjira is held with the left hand and played with the right fingers. The instrument is also used as auxilary accompaniment with mṛdanga in Karnātaka music concerts.

19-d. Idiophones

The other instruments, Ghata, Morsing (Egyptian harp), Tāla (cymbals) and triangle are idiophones and are all rhythm instruments.

Ghata (literally pot) is a baked clay pot with an open mouth which is narrow, considering the size of the ghata. Rarely, the mouth is tautly covered with a leather membrane. It is a very ancient instrument. The mouth is pressed against or towards the stomach of the performer, to add to the resonance. Both hands are employed in playing it on most of the surface using discrete, simulatneous, successive strokes, thumping, etc. resulting in a large vareity of sounds. The brittle, discrete, dry, resounding, bright sounds of the instrument offer a good foil to the mṛdanga with which it is used as an auxiliary accompaniment in a concert or as an accompaniment to the vīnā. It can be tuned only within very narrow limits; its sounds have no acoustical character.

Morsing is the Egyptian harp and is a very common folk music instrument also. It consists of a thin elastic iron strip called tongue; this is fixed to an iron/steel ring, projecting a little beyond at one end and curling slightly at the other end which is longer. This longer end is sandwiched between the two arms of the ring. The instrument is held in the left hand and the frame is placed between the lips. The tonuge is plucked with jerky movements by right fingers. The movement of the iron tongue is reinforced by intermittent blowing and sucking. The mouth cavity of the performer also serves as resonator. The instrument may be tuned within narrow limits by damping the curled end of the tongue with bees' wax to diminish the pitch. The morsing also is an auxiliary accompaniment with the mṛdanga.

The Tāla is a pair of small cymbals of bell metal. They are struck against each other to mark the *angas* in the *tāla āvarta*. The Trivalī is a steel triangle described in our music treatises since about a thousand years as an indiophone. It is suspended from the left hand and struck with a steel rod to mark the *angas* in the *tāla āvarta*. Both Tāla and Trivalī are used in a nāgasvaram recital to mark time.

Unlike Hindustāni music, Karnātaka instrumental music is modelled, influenced or inspired by vocal music and is therefore largely dependent on words and word-bound forms. It has yet to develop musical forms which explore and exploit the resources and techniques which characterize each instrument. The instrumental techniques developed nearly a thousand years ago and described by Śārngadeva[59], Somanathā[60], etc. in respect of various musical instruments await reconstruction and restoration to the contemporary concert platform.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

20. Teaching : Learner's Curriculum

Karnātaka music is being taught today on an unprecedented scale; it is taught at gradute, postgraduate and even (musicological) doctoral levels in many universities. Yet systematic formulation of principles, techniques, methods and content and textbooks therefor still remain a desideratum. Beginner's lessons such as the pedagogic scale, scalic and melodic exercises, rhythm exercises, simple songs are believed to have been formulated by Purandaradāsa, revered as the founder of modern Karnātaka music. Some of these are found described in Venkatmakhin's *Caturdandī Prakāśikā,* Tulaja's *Sangītasārāmrta* (inflated text), Bengeri Manuscript, Subbarāma Dīksita's *Sangīta-sampradāyapradarśinī*[61].

The teaching curriculum of Karnātaka music differs from its Hindustāni analogue. The beginner is familiarized with the reference pitch, the fifth and octave notes and taught several scalic exercises in a simple common *tāla* called *āditāla.* They include melodic phrases of regular and curved movement in ascent and descent *(sarali varise),* also doubled notes *(janti varise)* in progressively doubling speeds. This is followed by exercises calculated to familiarize common *tāla* structures. They consist of melodic passages set to the seven *sulādi tālas,* performed in three speeds. They are known as *tālālankāras.* These three sets of exercises are composed in the *rāga Māyāmālavagaula* and are time-honoured.

Next the beginner learns simple songs set to a single *rāga* (other than *Māyāmā-lavagaula)* and a single *tāla.* Thus the curriculum presents to the learner for the first time a confluence of words, *rāga* and *tāla.* The very first of these are the songs of Purandaradāsa praising Ganeśa and Virūpāksa of Hampi, etc. These are supplemented with others. This helps the students to learn all the 12 chromatic notes of the system in simple *rāgas* set to melodic phrases in which melodic phraseology corresponds to word phraseology and also simple *rāga* movements occur without words in the framework of *tāla-āvarta;* these are called *gītas.* Some of these contain description of the *rāga* to which the song is set, using mnemonic symbols.

The next stage is to learn the song type known as *svarajati* (vide 17-a supra), in which note groupings in prosodial structures are taught in a combination of temporal rhythm and sound rhythm, continuously moving against a fixed backdrop of *tāla-āvarta. Varna* follows the *svarajati* in curriculum. Here the student learns *rāgabhāva* (aesthetic import), melodic phrases and structures characteristic and special to the *rāga* in a slow tempo, tonal values and functions adequately illumined with appropriate *gamakas,* developing the resources of the medium, i.e. voice or instrument. Word theme is introduced here for the first time in the emotive context of divine love *(bhakti)* or human love *(śrngāra). Cittasvara* and *ettugade svaras* which are integral to the *varna* serve as introduction to various kinds of segmentation and to the *ex tempore* creative element *kalpanā svara.* The *carana* is introduction to refrain in *mātu* and *dhātu* which is later taught as *pallavi* in *krti,* etc. The *varna* is taught in three (progressively doubling) speeds (and performed in an additional, usually *trisra, gati)* so that the morphic changes wrought in *tāla* structuring and *rāgabhāva* when executed in different speeds, as also the techniques needed are realised. As mentioned already, *varna* is esteemed for the firm

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

grip it gives the student on *rāgabhāva* and *tāla.*

The next phase is to learn *kṛtis* of renowned composers in middle and slow tempo, followed by *devarānāma, tillāna, pada, jāvali,* etc. In *manodharma sangīta* the student is now taught *rāgālāpana, neravalu* and *kalpanā svara* in the first stage and *tāna, pallavi,* etc. later.

This training is scientific, leading the student in regular gradation from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex, from the infrastructure to the superstructure. It is a staircase of concepts, notions, materials, techniques and intradisciplinal and interdisciplinal extrapolations. It is also a path for aesthetic imaginativeness and creativity consummating the fulfilment of *rasa*-experience. The replacement of the *gurukula* method with institutionalized mass teaching has unfortunately diminished, if not destroyed, the qualities of total involvement, dedication, depth and spiritual endeavour in the practitioner. A curious lacuna in Karnātaka music is the scant attention which voice training has received both in theory and practice. Śārngadeva's illuminating voice classification and descriptions of vocal and instrumental techniques remain unheeded[62].

21. Concert Conventions

The musical forms which were performed on various occasions in Karnātaka music have been already described (section 17).

A concert of Karnātaka music is called *kacēri.* The word has diffused from Muslim culture through British administration into south India to mean a court of dispute which also coincided with the royal court. In Karnataka, Cikarāja Wadiyar inaugurated the 18 administrative offices *(athārah kacēri)* in 1700 A.D. under the influence of Muhammad Shah of Delhi. Formerly a concert was called *kēlike* or *vinike.* When arranged by a concert-arranging organization *(sangītasabhā),* the concert is called *sabhākacēri,* when it is somewhat more serious and academic. The present form of the concert was probably inaugurated in the royal courts of Tanjore, e.g. Tulaja, Śarabhoji, etc. and gradually diffused through the royal courts of Mysore and Travancore down to the smaller courts of chieftans. Thus it is about 250 years old.

The organizer informs the accompanying musicians of the reference pitch of the main performer. Both arrive at the concert venue a few minutes before the scheduled commencement of the concert and tune the tambūra and (then) the accompanying instruments,in a relatively silent environment, to the reference pitch *(ādharaśruti)* of the main performer. A prior knowledge of this reference pitch enables the accompanists to bring instruments of appropriate pitch range. Then the artistes proceed to, and are seted on, the concert platform (which in the context of religious festivals such as Ganesa caturthi; Rāmanavami, Kṛsnāstami, etc. are placed at the end of the hall away from the deity so that the musicians sit facing the deity). Finer tuning and final adjustments are now made; a few moments of intense awareness of the reference pitch ensues.

The seating order of musicians on the concert stage follows a conventional sanction. The main performer occupies the fore-midplatform, facing the audience. His disciple, if any, sits to his rear and gives vocal support and performs the *tāla;* the violinist and

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

mṛdangist are seated near the front corners of the platform, to the left and right of the main performer, and face each other. If the mṛdangist is left handed, their positions are reversed. If the main performer is a vocalist, auxiliary accompaniments are optionally arranged. Thus the khañjira, ghata, dōlak, konegōlu and morsing artistes are each seated progressively behind the preceding one, morsing occupying the rear middle of the platform. One or two tambūras are performed incessantly throughout the concert to the rear of the main performer, on one or both sides of the disciple, if any. When this full complement of accompaniments is not used, the order of preference of use is as mentioned above. The minimum is a tambūra, violin and mṛdanga. If it is a vīnā or gotṭuvādya concert, the accompaniment may be limited to a mṛdanga or ghata. The main performer is the leader of the group; accompaniments are expected to subserve him. Among the percussives, the mṛdangist is the leader; other percussive accompanists function under his guidance.

The main performer seeks (as a formality and out of respectfulness or politeness) the permission of the chief patron, president, organizer or senior musicians who may be among the audience and commences the concert. A generation ago, the first song of the concert was always the *varna,* rendered briskly or in a slow tempo followed by execution in higher speeds and *triśra gati.* This was followed with a *kṛti* each in propitiation of Lord Ganeśa and Sarasvati. This practice is now being slowly eroded. If the concert may be regarded as proceeding in three phases, viz. initial, middle and final, the initial phase is in a brisk pace and consists of a series of short *kṛtis* in attractive *(rakti) rāgas* in middle tempo, sometimes preceded by a brief *rāgālāpana,* sometimes interspersed with *kalpanā svara,* sometimes with both, sometimes with neither. A recent trend in performing *kalpanā svara* and/or *ālāpanā* for every composition in this phase robs it of variety and balance and should be discouraged. When there is an *ālāpanā* introduction it stimulates curiosity in the informed section of the audience as to which *kṛti* of which composer would follow, and offers a setting for the performer for rendering the *kṛti* replete with *rāgabhāva.*

In the middle phase the performer takes up detailed, elaborate *ālāpanā* of such a *rāga* which is conducive to profound aesthetic experience, to ready elaboration, and susceptible to execution in different paces.

This is followed with a *kṛti* in slow tempo or if the concert is set up in an atmosphere of scholarship or academic interest or is presented to the cognoscentee, with a *pallavi.* This is the focal point, the *pièce de resistance,* of the concert. If *pallavi* is rendered, it is preceded by *tāna* after *rāgālāpana. Kṛti* or *pallavi,* the performance includes detailed *neravalu* and *kalpanā svara.* The latter usually and the former occasionally in a *pallavi* is executed in *rāgamālikā.* It is here that the accompanists have an opportunity to display their excellence in skill, imaginativeness, scholarship, etc. The percussionists have the lion's share of this opportunity, for they are offered a spacious opportunity for solo performance. The concert reaches its climax in this phase.

The third phase is oriented to emotive expression. Two or three *devaranāmas,* sometimes prefaced with an appropriate *ugābhoga* are rendered (in Karnataka, and corresponding compositional forms are performed in Tamil, Telugu or Malayālam).

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

These are followed by one or more each of *pada, jāvali, aṣtapadi, daru* and *tillāna,* in that order. A *śloka* in Samskṛta is performed in *rāgamālikā* after this. The concert concludes with a *mangala* (benedictory song) in the *rāga Madhyamāvati, Suruti* or *Saurāṣtra.* A vīnā concert omits *śloka. Kṛti* forms the bulk of the concert, drawn mostly from Tyāgarāja and from Muddusvāmi Dīkṣita, Śyāmāśāstrī, Svāti Tirunāl, Ramnād Srīnivasa Ayyangar, Mysore Sadāśivarāo, Mysore Vāsudevācārya, Muttayya Bhāgavata, Tallapākam Annamayya, Bhadrācala Rāmadās, Jayacāmarāja Wadiyar, Arunagirināthar, Koṭīśvara Ayyar, etc. Some musicians offer one or two lesser known *kṛtis* and one or two rare *rāgas. Devaranāma* and *ugābhoga* are usually of Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa or Vyāsarāja. *Pada* is usually of Ksetrayya; a *jāvali* may be in Kannada or Telugu, from Dharamapuri Subbarāya, Pattābhirāmayya, Candrasekhara Śāstri, Venkatarāmayya, Pattanam Subrahmanya Ayyar, Rāmnād Śrīnivāsa Ayyangār, Mummadi Kṛsnarāja Wadiyar, Aliya Lingarāja, Venkatādri Śāmarāya, Hullahalli Rāmanna, Vāsudeva Vitthala, etc. *Astapadi* is of course a selection from Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda.* The *daru* is selected from Muttaya Bhāgavata. Tillāna of Vīnā Śeṣanna, Bālamuralikṛsna, Lālgudi Jayaraman, Svāti Tirunāl, Ponnayya, Mysore Sadāśivarao, Vīnā Venkatagiriyappa, etc. is performed. Occasionally a *taranga* or *daru* of Nārayanatirtha is also included. *Śloka* is selected from *Rāmakarnāmṛta, Krsnakarnāmṛta, Saundaryalaharī, Amarušataka, Gitagovinda, Mukundamālāstotra* or any other discrete poem. A *rāgamālikā* song from Muddusvāmi Diksita, Svāti Tirunāl, Sītārāmayya, Mahāvaidyanātha Ayyar, Tiruvottiyuru Tyāgayya is occasionally included. As already mentioned, the *mangala* is from Purandaradāsa (in Karnataka) or Tyāgarāja[63].

22. Conclusion

The above concert plan of Karnātaka music reveals a principle which characterizes both Karnātaka music and Indian culture. The concert commences with praise of God. It develops the creative beauty and *nāda* and *laya* progressively. It depicts the introspection, insight, self-criticism, surrender, etc. which the devotee and the seeker experiences when caught in the trap which the world of fellow beings and his own prejudices, illusions, weakness, hypocrisy lay for him. Thus the individual passes through a phase of catharsis of *jīvā-rasa,* i.e. emotional crisis of the inner man. Then follows a phase of *saundarya-rasa* where the fluid formal beauty of *nāda* and *laya* dominates, lifting the soul to a plane of pure aesthesis, another process of cleansing, elevation, edification. After this climax, the third phase proceeds to *rasaviśrānti,* a state of rest, freedom from all affective and emotive experience. This auspicious tranquility, repose, restfulness is the destinaion of all art. The river of art experience meanders amidst dales and forests, ups and downs, subterranean caves, plateaus and plains of human experience of the outer world of reference and the inner world of the individual, and finally reaches the brimful ocean of peace, an ocean of unqualified joy which is kin to the bliss of *brahman,* where one loses one's self to become oneself, where this mundane, mortal *rasa* becomes that transcendental, immortal *Rasa,* where this beauty is transmuted into that Beauty which is also Truth and Auspiciousness.

These are the foundations of all Indian art; this is their goal. These are the foundations of Karnātaka music; this is its goal. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

References

1 Sambamoorthy P., *History of Indian Music,* pp. 3-4.

2 Kāśināṭha Apātulasi Paralikar, *Saṅgītasudhākara,* 1.11-12, p.2.

3 *Ibid.* 2.516, p. 58.

4 *Saṅgītasāra* is now known only through references to it and Vidyāranya by Govinda Dīksita in his *Saṅgītasudhā,* 2.406 *et. seq.,* 3.35–48.

5 *Vide* Venkatamakhin, *Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā,* pp. 155–57; Tulaja, *Saṅgītasārāmṛta,* XII, p. 153.

6 Matanga, *Brhaddeśi,* 281, p. 81.

7 *Ibid.* 280, Kallināṭha's reading in *Saṅgītakalānidhi. q.v.*

8 Abhinavagupta, *Dhvanyālokalocana* 47.

9 Bharatamuni, *Nāṭyaśastram,* 28.24-25, 34-36 etc. Śārngadeva, *Saṅgītaratnākara,* 1.3.40-46.

10 Sathyanarayana, R., *Śruti: The Scalic Foundation,* pp. 13-20. *Idhem, Nihśankahrdaya,* comm. on Śarngadeva, *op.cit* pp. 372-90. *Idhem,* 'Śruti-Jāti: A Study in Textual and Psychoacoustical Exegesis', paper read at Music Seminar, Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Music Sabha, Bombay, 1981.

11 Śārngadeva, *op.cit.* 1.3-6, pp.62-168. For explanation of terms *mūrchhanā, tāna, varna, alamkāra, vādi,* etc. see Sathyanarayana, R., *Nihśankahrdaya,* p. 4.

12 Matanga, *op.cit.* 94-133, pp. 22-28.

13 Rāmāmātya, *Śvaramelakalānidhi,* 2.35 p. 11.

14 *Vide* Bharatamuni, *o.cit.* 28.33 pr.p.27; 28.65, p.43; Śārngadeva, *op.cit.* 1.4.6; Dattila, Dattilam, 20, p. 3; Abhinavaguptạ, *Abhinavabhāraṭī*, comm. on Bharatamuni, *op.cit loc. cit* pp. 27-29, 43; Matanga, *op.cit.* p. 68 extracting from Bharatamuni, op.cit. *(Kāvyamālā* edn. 28.72-3, p.442).

15 Kallināṭha, *Saṅgitakalānidhi,* comm. on Śārngadeva, op.cit 2. 159, p. 115.

16 *Idhem. op.cit loc.cit* 2.30-32, pp. 28-33, 2.159-60, 0pp. 114-16 See also Rāmāmātya 2.25-65, pp. 10-13; 3.14-20; Puṇḍarīka Vitthala, *Sadrāgacandrodaya,* 2.32-4, pp. 91-2; Venkatamikhin, *op.cit.* 3.1-7, pp. 166-71.

17 Bharatamuni, *op.cit.* 28.35. p. 32; Śārngadeva, *op.cit.* 1.5.6

18 Puṇḍarīka Vitthala, *Rāgāmālā,* 155, 156, 165, 178, 185, 198-200, 205-08 (and corresponding verses in *idhem, Nartananirnaya);* Rāmāmātya, *op.cit.* 4.52-62, pp. 26-7.

19 Venkatamakhin, *op.cit.* 3.23-7.

20 Tulaja, *op.cit* 9, pp. 68-70.

21 See Venkatamakhin, *op.cit* 5. pp. 195-203; Tulaja, *op.cit,* 9. p.65; 10. pp. 72-111, Mudduvenkatamakhin, Rāgalaksanam, pp. 249-65; Govindācārya, *Samgrahacūdāmani,* 3. pp. 84-149; Tiruvenkatakavi, *Saṅgītasārasamgrahamu, pp. 26 et seq..*

22 Rāmāmātya *op.cit* 5. pp. 25-37; Govinda, Poūri-, Rāgatāla-cintāmani, 4.53-49. pp. 135-50.

23 Pundarika Vitthala, *Sadrāgacandrodaya,* 2.1.43-58; Somanātha, *Rāgavibodha,* 3.1-26.

24 Venkatamakhin, *op.cit.* 4, 1-92, pp. 178-84.

25 Pundarika Vitthala, *op.cit.* 3. 6f. No indication is available to determine whether this reference, viz. "Ĵanya-janaka-rāga-nirūpanam" and all other titles, legends, colophons, etc. are editorial insertions or whether they formed an integral part of the original text.

26 Nijaguna Śivaayogi, *Vivekacintāmani, 4, Jambūdvīpakathana,* 492-97. *'Misra'* is also read as *'Mitra'* in some *apparatus criticus.*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

[27] Somanātha, Pālkuriki-, *Basavapurānamu;Sakaleśvaru Mādirājayya katha,* p. 90.

[28] *Idhem. Panditārādhya-caritramu, Parvata-prakaranamu,* p. 455.

[29] Padmanānka, *Padmarājapurānam,* 3.63, p.40.

[30] Bhīmakavi, *Basavapurāna,* 22.18, p.260.

[31] Nijaguna Śivayogi, *op. cit. loc.cit.* 408-09.

[32] Sudhākalaśa, Sangītopanisat-sāroddhāra, 3.71-111, p. 63-7.

[33] Govinda, Poluri, *op. cit.,* 4.154 pr. p. 151.

[34] Somanātha, *op.cit.* 5.220, introductory comment; p. 224.

[35] Śrikantha, *Rasakaumudī,* 2.82, pp. 22-3.

[36] Sathyanarayana, R., 'Rāga-Iconification in Indian Music', Vivekananda Patrika, Madras, Aug. 1984; pp. 107-126.

[37] Bhatkhande, V.N. '*The Modern Hindustāni Rāga System and the Simplest Method of Studying the Same*' published in the Report of the Fourth All India Music Conference, Lucknow, Vol. 2. pp. 114-47.

[38] Karnad, S.N. *'Time Theory',* ibid, pp. 202-08, Lucknow 1925.

[39] Nānyadeva, *Sarasvatihrdayālamkārahāra* (*Bharatabhāsya*), (gītikālaprakaranam) 2.1. and folio 76 (BORI MS); Nārada, *Sangītamakaranda,* 1.3.6-34; Śārngadeva, *op.cit* 2.29, 32.

[40] Rāmāmātya, *op.cit* 5.20-65; Pundarika Vitthala, *Sadrāga-candrodaya, 2.12-76;* idhem; *Rāgamālā,* idhem. *Rāgamanjarī,* 2.9-69; *Idhem. Nartananirnaya,* 3.1.168-233; Śrikantha, *op.cit.* 2.80-174; Govinda Kavi, Poluri-, *Rāgatālacintāmani,* 4.73 *et. seq;* Dāmodara, Catūra-, *Sangīta-darpanam,* 2.171-82; Somanāthā, *op.cit.* 4. 5-46; Venkatamakhin, *op.cit.* 5. 52-104; Mudduvenkatamakhin, *Ragalaksanam,* 2.1.145; Tulaja, *op.cit.* 10. pp. 72-111.

[41] Janna, *Anantanāthapurānam* 6. 70 pr. p. 135; Gunavarma II, *Puspadantapurānam,* i.19 pr.; Mangarasa, *Samyaktvakaumudī,* 12.; Ratnakara Varni, *Bharateśavaibhava,* 1.76, 5.60 f., 11.8, 18.134.

[42] Kallinātha, *op.cit.* Śarngadeva, *op.cit.* 5.137-8, p. 134-36, 5.261-62, pp. 139-142.

[43] Acyutarāya, *Tālakalābdhi,* extr. Ramakrishna Kavi, *Bharatakośa,* p. 248.

[44] For details, see Sathyanarayana, R., 'Sulādis and Ugabhogas of Karnataka music', pp. 21—6. 45—62.

[45] Śārngadeva, *op.cit.* 2. 25—7, pp. 21—2; Govinda Dīksita, *op.cit.* 2. 460—68; Venkatamakhin, *op.cit.* ch. 6.

[46] *'Dvyardha'* is so named because it is half (ardha) of the eighth (*dvi*-guna); Pārśvdeva, *Sangī-tasamayasāra,* 2.28 pr. p. 6.

[47] Pārśvadeva, *op.cit.* 2.15-27, pp. 6-7; Śārngadeva, *op.cit.* 3.191-96, pp. 192—194; Simhabhūpala, *Sangītasudhākara,* comm. Śārngadeva, *op.cit. loc. cit.* pp. 192—95; Kallinātha, *op.cit.* loc.cit. pp. 192-94; Moksadeva, *Sangīta-rasakalikā,* extr. Rāmakrishna Kavi *op.cit.* p. 800; Pundarika Vitthala, *Sadrāgacandrodaya,* 3.24-8; Govinda Dīksita, op.cit. 3.287-96, p. 273.

[48] Pārśvadeva, *op.cit.* 2.32—123, pp. 7—15.

[49] Sārngadeva, *op.cit.* 3.97—188, pp. 171—78; Govinda Dīksita, *op. cit.* 3.163—286, pp. 264—73.

[50] Bharatamuni, *op.cit.* ch. 32.

[51] For detailed discussion of these and other song forms see Sathyanarayana, R., *Karnātaka Sangītavāhini,* pp. 349—443.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

52 *Ibid.* pp. 27-9, 370–72.

53 Tulaja, *op.cit.* Introduction, pp. xx, xxi.

54 Raghunatha Nayaka, *Srngārasāvitri, cit.* Sambamoorthy, P., *Dictionary of South Indian Music and Musicians,* Vol. 2. p. 201.

55 Sambamoorthy, P., *op. cit. loc. cit.*

56 Sundaram Iyer, P.A. 'Supremacy of the Violin' published in the souvenir, Sree Thyagaraja Mahotsava, Sri Lakshminārayana Sangeetha Kalashala Samsthe, Kanchana, D.K., 1968

57 Sambamoorthy, P. *ibid.* vol. 1 p. 37; Sathyanarayana, R., *Bharatanatya: A Critical Study,* p. 171; *idhem,* 'Violin in Karnataka" talk delivered at the Annual Music Conference, Music Academy, Madras, 1980; *idhem,* 'Violin: A Study in Evolution', talk delivered at Annual Conference, Karnataka Ganakala Parishat, Bangalore, 1985; *idhem,* 'Violin Through the Ages', published in the sourvenir, Chowdaiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore, at the opening ceremony, 1980; *idhem,* 'Violin', published in *Śruti,* 19. pp. 18–20.

58 Boyden, David, P., 'The Violin' published in *Musical Instruments Through the Ages.* ed. Baines, Anthony, pp. 104–108.

59 Śārngadeva, *op.cit.* ch. 6 *inter alia.*

60 Somanāthā, *op.cit.* 5, pp. 119–227.

61 Venkatamakhin, *op.cit.* 3. 81–116; Tulaja, *op.cit.*; Introduction, pp. xv–xix; Subbarama Dīksita, *Sangita-sampradāyapradarśini Prathamābhyāsa Pustakamu,* pp. 1–70.

62 Śārngadeva, 3. 39–83, pp. 159–168.

63 Sathyanarayana, R., *Karnataka Sangītavāhini,* pp. 29–32, 544–77.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Bibliography

ACYUTARĀYA, *Tālakalābdhi, extr.* Rāmakrishna Kavi, M., *Bharatakośa, q.v.*

ABHINAVAGUPTA, *Dhvanyālokalocana, comm.* Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka,* ed. Durgaprasad, Kashinath Panduranga Parab, Nirnayasagar Press. Bombay, 1891.

—Kavyamālā Series No. 25, Bombay, 1928.

—(with commentaries *Locana, Kaumudi, Uttungodaya, Upalocana),* M.M. Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Madras, 1944.

—Krishnamurthy, K. (ed. tr.) *Kannada Kavi-Kāvyamāle,* Sharadamandira, Mysore, 1961.

BENGERI MANUSCRIPT, Sri Varalakshmi Academies of Fine Arts, Mysore.

BHARATAMUNI, *Nātyaśāstram,* ed Shivadatta, Kashinatha Panduranga Parab, Kāvyamālā Series No. 42, Bombay, 1894.

—ed. Batukanatha Sharma, Baladeva Upadhyaya, Chowkhamba Samskrta Series No. 60, Banaras, 1929.

—ed. Ramakrishna Kavi, M., Gaekwad Oriental Series, Oriental Institute, Baroda.

Vol. 1, second rev. edn. Ramaswami Sastri, K.S., No. 36, 1956.

Vol. 2, No. 68, 1934

Vol. 3, No. 124, 1954.

Vol. 4, No. 145, 1964.

BHATKHANDE, *V.N., 'The Modern Hindustani Raga System and the Simplest Method of Studying the Same',* published in the Report of the Fourth All India Music Conference, Lucknow, 1925.

BHĪMAKAVI, *Basava-Purānam,* ed. Hiremath, R.C., Lingayata Vidyabhivriddhi Samsthe, Publication No. 12, Sahitya Samiti, Lingayata Vidyabhivriddhi Samsthe, Dharawada, 1958.

BOYDEN, DAVID, P., 'The Violin' in *Musical Instruments Through the Ages* ed. Baines, Anthony, Pelican Books, London, 1961.

DĀMODARA, CATURA–, *Sangītadarpanam,* ed. Vasudeva Sastri, K., Tanjore Sarasvati Mahal Library Series 34, Tanjore Sarasvati Mahal Library, Tanjore, 1952.

DATTILA, DATTILAM, ed. Sambashiva Sastri, K., Trivandrum Samskrta Series 102, Trivandrum, 1930.

———, ed. tr. Nijenhuis, E. Wiersma-Te, Orientalia Rheno-Traiectina, eds. Gonda, J., Obbink, H.W., vol. II, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1970.

GOVINDĀCĀRYA, *Samgraha Cūdāmani,* ed. Subrahmanya Sastri, S., Adyar Library, Madras, 1938.

GOVINDA DĪKSITA, *Sangītasudhānidhī,* ed. Subrahmanya Sastri, S., Madras Music Academy Series No. 1, Music Academy, Madras, 1940.

GOVINDA, POLŪRI, *Rāgatālacintāmani,* ed. Subba Row, T.V., Government Oriental Series 89, Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, 1952.

GUNAVARMA II, *Puspadanta-purānam,* eds. Venkata Rao, A., Sesha Iyengar, H., Madras University Kannada Series 4, Madras University, Madras, 1933.

JANNA, *Anantanātha-purānam,* eds. Srinivasachar, D., Rangaswami Iyenger, H.R., Oriental Library, Mysore, 1930.

KALLINĀTHA, *Sangītakalānidhi,* comm. Śārngadeva *q.v.*

KARNAD, S.N., *'Time Theory',* published in the Report of the Fourth All India Music Conference, Lucknow, 1925.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

KASHINĀTHA APĀTULASI PARALĪKAR, *Sangita Sudhākara,* ed. Vishnu Sharma, Aryabhushana Press, Poona, 1917.

MANGARASA, *Samyaktva-Kaumudi,* Karnataka Jaina-Kāvya-mālā No. 1, published by Chaugule, D.F., Belgaum, 1923.

MATANGA, *Brhaddeśī,* ed. Sambashiva Sastri, K., Trivandrum Samskrta Series 94, Trivandrum, 1928.

MOKSADEVA, *Sangitarasasara,* Kalikā, extr. Rāmakrishna Kavi, M., *Bharatakośa, q.v.*

MUDDUVENKATAMAKHIN, *Rāgalaksanam* ed. tr. Sathyanarayana, R., Prasaranga, Bangalore University, Bangalore, 1978 (appx. to Venkatamakhin *q.v.*)

NĀNYADEVA, *Sarasvatihrdayālankārahāra (Bharatabhāsya, Bharatavārtika),* ed. Chaitanya Desai, Vol. 2, Indira Kala Sangita Viswavidyalaya, Series No. 3, Indira Kala Sangita Viswavidyalaya, Khairagarh, M.P., 1976.

—MS. copy, Sri Varalakshmi Academies of Fine Arts, Mysore (Exemplar: MS No. 111 of 1869-70, BORI, Poona)

NĀRADA, *Sangītamakaranda,* ed. Telang, M.R., Gaekwad Oriental Series 16, Oriental Insitute, Baroda, 1920.

NIJAGUNAŚIVAYOGI, *Viveka-cintāmani,* ed. Subrahmanya Sastri, Siddhanti, Bangalore, 1863.

PADMANANKA, *Padmarājapurānam,* ed. Mallaradhya, B. Bangalore, 1909.

PĀRŚVADEVA, *Sangīta—samaya—sāra,* ed. Ganapati Sastri, T., Trivandrum Samskrt Series No. 87, Trivandrum, 1925.

PUNDARĪKA VITTHALA, *Sadrāga—candrodaya, Rāgamālā, Rāgamañjarī* and *Nartananirnaya (Pundarīkamāla)* ed. tr. Sathyanarayana, R., Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy and Directorate of Kannada & Culture, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore, 1986.

RAGHUNĀTHA NAYAKA, *Śṛngāra-sāvitri, cit.* Sambamoorthy, P., *A Dictionary of South Indian Music and Musicians q.v.*

RAMAKRISHNA KAVI, M., comp. ed. *Bharatakośa,* Sri Venkateswara Oriental Series No. 30, Tirupati, 1951.

RĀMĀMĀTYA, *Svaramela kalānidhi,* ed. Ramaswami Aiyer, M.S., Annamalai University, Chidambaram, 1932.

RATNĀKARA VARNI *Bharateśa-vaibhavam,* ed. Mangesha Rao, Ugrana, Jaina Yuvaka Sangha, Mangalore, 1923.

SAMBAMOORTHY, P., *History of Indian Music,* Indian Music Publishing House, Madras, 1960.

—*A Dictionary of South Indian Music & Musicians,* Indian Music Publishing House, Madras, Vol. 1, 1952; Vol. 2, 1959; Vol. 3, 1971.

ŚĀRNGADEVA, *Sangītaratnākara,* ed. Subrahmanya Sastri, S., Adyar Library, Madras. Vol. 1, No. 30, 1943; Vol. 2, No. 43, 1944; Vol. 3, No. 78, 1951; Vol. 4 No. 86, 1953.

SATHYANARAYANA, R., *Karnātaka Sangītavāhini,* Prasaranga, University of Mysore, Mysore, 1980.

—*Caturdandi-prakāśikā* and *Rāgalaksanam,* ed. tr., Prasaranga, Bangalore University, Bangalore, 1978.

—*Nihśanka-hrdaya,* comm. Śārngadeva, *op.cit.,* Prasaranga, University of Mysore, Mysore, 1968.

—*'Sulādis and Ugābhogas of Karnātaka Music',* Sri Varalakshmi Academies of Fine Arts, Mysore, 1968.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

—*Sruti, the Scalic Foundation'*, Sri Varalakshmi Academies of Fine Arts, Mysore, 1972.

—*Śruti-Jāti: A Study in Textual and Psychoacoustical Exegesis'*, paper read at Music Seminar, Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Music Sabha, Bombay, 1981.

—*'Rāga-Iconification in Indian Music'*, published in Vivekananda Kendra Patrika, Madras, August 1984.

—*Bharatanātya: A Critical Study*, Sri Varalakshmi Academy Publication Series, Sri Varalakshmi Academies of Fine Arts, Mysore, 1968.

—*'Violin in Karnātaka'*, talk delivered at Annual Music Conference, Music Academy, Madras, 1980.

—*'Violin: A Study in Evolution'*, talk delivered at Annual Music Conference, Karnātaka Ganakala Parishat, Bangalore, 1985.

—*'Violin Through the Ages'*, published in souvenir, opening Ceremony of Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore, 1980.

—, *'The Modern Violin is not of Indian Origin'*, published in *Śruti* No. 19, Madras, October 1985.

SIMHABHŪPĀLA, *Sangītasudhākara*, comm. Śārngadeva *op. cit. q.v.*

SOMANĀTHA, *Rāgavibodha*, ed. Subrahmanya Sastri, S., Adyar Library Series No. 48, Adyar Library, Madras, 1945.

SOMANĀTHA, PĀLKURIKI-, *Panditārādya-caritramu*, ed. Narayana Rao, C., Andhra Granthamālā 30, Andhra Patrika Press, Madras, 1939.

—, *Basavapurānamu.*, ed. Thammayā, Bandaru—, Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu and Sons, Madras, 1942.

ŚRIKANTHA, *Rasakaumudi*, ed. Jani, A.N., Gaekwad Oriental Series No. 143, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1963.

SUBBARĀMA DĪKSITA, *Sangīta Sampradāya-Pradarśinī;* Prathamābhyāsa Pustakamu, Ettayapuram, 1905.

SUDHĀKALAŚA, *Sangitopanisat-sāroddhāra*, ed. Umakant Premanand Shah, Gaekwad Oriental Series No. 133, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1961.

SUNDARAM IYER, P.A., *'Supremacy of the Violin'*, published in sourvenir, Tyagaraja Mahotsava, Sri Lakshminarayana Sangītakalāshālā Samsthe, Kanchana, D.K., 1968.

TIRUVENKATA KAVI, *Sangītasārasamgrahamu*, ed. Subbaramayya, G., Music Academy, Madras, 1940.

TULAJA, *Sangītasārāmṛtam*, ed. Subrahmanya Sastri, S., Madras Music Academy Series No. 5, Music Academy, Madras, 1942.

VENKATAMAKHIN *Caturdandi-prakāśika*, ed. tr. Sathyanarayana, R., *vide* Mudduvenkatamakhin, *Supra.*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Dhrupada: Its Legacy and Dynamics

Sumati Mutatkar

In the Hindustāni musical hierarchy, the *dhrupada* (derived from 'Dhruvapada') form – inclusive of *dhamāra* and *sādra* – occupies the highest rank as a legacy from the past, representing the depth and grandeur of musical classicism.

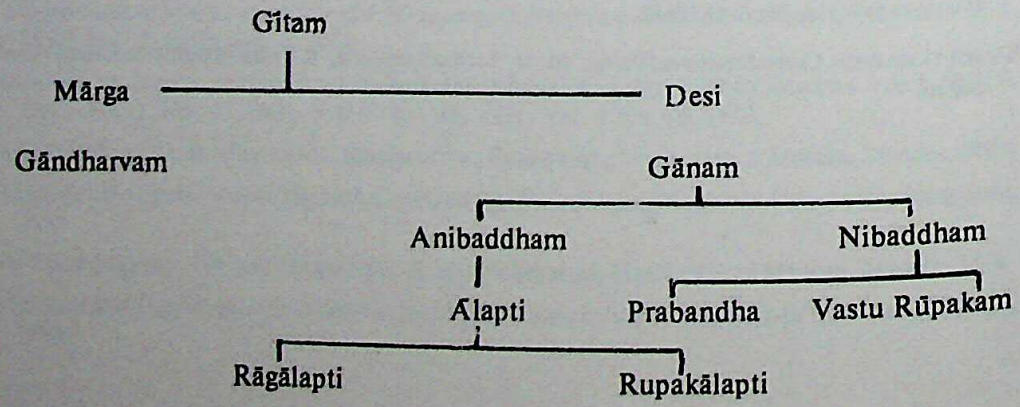
It is heartening to note that both at home and abroad, there is all-round evidence of a growing and respectful interest in *dhrupada*. However, this is not enough. The real need today is to reestablish the importance of this form not only as a performance genre, but to extend its relevance as a unifying and vitalizing force in the entire realm of Hindustāni music, both vocal and instrumental.

Beginning with a broad account of the lineage of *dhrupada*, this article is an attempt to explore meaningfully the relevance of the *dhrupada* complex to the musical situation obtaining today.

The triad of *rāga-tāla-prabandha* is the matrix of Indian music comprising the two systems, Hindustāni and Carnātic. The *rāga*, a melodic pattern or theme, is of pivotal value; and the unfolding of the *rāga* form, its aesthetic potentials reinforced by *prabandha* – a concrete embodiment of the theme – its supreme import.

This musical edifice, specified as *gāna* in Indian musicological parlance, has two facets, the *anibaddha* (unstructured or unbound) and *nibaddha* (structured or bound). *Anibaddha* signifies a free, open manner of *rāga* elaboration, formerly termed *ālapti* and called *ālāpa* today. As against this, the *nibaddha* has structural divisions which are technically known as *dhātus* – colloquially called *tuks* – and content constituents called *angas*..

The chart below presents in a nutshell the total musical complex detailed in the *Sangita Ratnākara* of the 13th century.



Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The word *prabandha* means, in its wider sense, components so bound together as to form a coherent whole. In Indian music, the term denotes a musical structure bound by *dhātus* — specified structural divisions — on the one hand, and by *angas,* content components, on the other. Four divisions or *dhātus* are mentioned— *udgraha, melapaka, dhruva* and *abhoga*— with an additional *dhātu* called *antarā* inserted between *dhruva* and *abhoga,* its use confined to *sālaga suda,* a particular category of *prabandha.* Six in number, the *angas* mentioned are *svara, viruda, pada* (meaningful verbal text), *tāna, pāta* (mnemonic syllables produced on various instruments), and *tāla* (rhythmic time-cycle).

Two is the minimum number of *dhātus* and *angas* prescribed for a *prabandha.* The enormous number and vast variety of *prabandhas* have been systematically classified and described in works like *Sangita Ratnākara* and *Sangita Rāja.* This *nibaddha-anibaddha* twosome covers the entire range of *rāga* manifestation and in its essence holds good even today.

A study of *prabandha* lore brings to the fore a *prabandha* group called *sālaga-suda* which presents itself as a fountainhead for the onward flow of Indian music and its traditions. With its liberal norms and capacity for accommodating changes and new adjustments, the *sālaga-suda* could be looked upon as a form endowed with a dynamism and continuum so necessary for a living art, renewing itself and growing through the centuries without losing its moorings.

Jaideva's *Gita Govinda,* a 12th-century work, is an example of the *suda* layout. On the ground that it partakes of the characteristics of both the *shuddha* and *sālaga-suda* varieties, Mahārāna Kumbha in his *Sangita Rāja* innovated the distinctive name *mishra suda* for this third variety. Its structure, however, does not have a marked affinity with *dhrupada.*

According to a general consensus now taking shape among scholars, the *sālaga-suda* comprising *udgraha, dhruva* and/or *antara* and *abhoga* comes very close to *dhrupada.* This was a matrix for *dhrupada* to grow upon. The transition from *prabandha* to *dhrupada* started in the 13th century itself; this is indicated by a composition of Nāyaka Gopāla in praise of the emperor Allauddin Khilji.

However, it was in the 15th — or rather at the dawn of the 16th — century that *dhrupada* acquired a crystalized structure, content and ethos. It gained an identity of its own, contemporary relevance and wide appeal. The credit for this goes to Rāja Mān Singh Tomar of Gwalior who in collaboration with learned, creative scholar-musicians at his court like Nāyaka Bakshu, Nāyaka Baiju, Mahmood Lohang and Pāndaviya, brought about a blend of the codified *prabandha* and regional styles, infusing the *dhrupada* form with stateliness and grandeur and a durable, sturdy frame. The *sthāyī-antarā-sanchārī-abhoga* structure of present-day *dhrupada* emerged through a process of recasting the divisions of the *prabandha* which were in part renamed.

As a compositional structure, as a graspable embodiment of the abstract *rāga* in its many facets, *dhrupada* attained the highest position of respect and glory in Hindustāni music as also wide popularity. Detailed references found in 17th–, 18th– and 19th–century Persian works on music like *Rāga Darpana, Tohfat-ul-Hind* and *Usulun-*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Naghmat-e-Asifi bring out well the supremacy of *dhrupada. Rāga Darpana,* a 17th century work based on Rājā Mān Singh's *Mana Kutuhala,* exalts the uniqueness of *dhrupada:*

After the innovation of the *dhruvapada* form, the *prabandha* style of singing no more remained in vogue. This form of singing was so widely accepted and practised by the most renowned as well as common musicians that all other forms of singing disappeared. There are two reasons for this change:

1. At the time when the *dhruvapada* was taking roots, the *mārgi* forms of music were losing popularity and *deshvali (deshi)* forms of music were being appreciated increasingly.

Thus *dhruvapada* absorbed the characteristics of both *mārgi* and *deshi* styles of singing.

2. Raja Mān Singh had assembled together the most renowned musicians two hundred years ago, had pooled together their vast and rich musical talents to develop the novel musical form of *dhruvapada* in which they assimilated the best features of *mārgi* and *deshi sangeet.* The language of this new form incorporated the language of both styles.

It would be impossible to create a musical form like *dhruvapada* today, even if the same resources and musical talents which were accessible to Raja Man Singh could be utilized for the purpose.

The author of *Tohfat-ul-Hind* describes the popularity of *dhruvapada:*

Now, I shall describe the *geets* which are prevalent and popular at the present time. Among them the first and foremost is *dhruvapada.* It consists of four *tuks* (parts) and each *tuk* is called by a different name. These are: (1) *sthal* or *sthayi* or *peedhabandha* (2) *antarā* (3) *bhog* (4) *abhog.*

According to *Uṣsulun-Naghmat-e-Asifi, dhruvapada* was a widely prevalent form of singing during the author's time (the latter part of the 18th and the early decades of the 19th century). The *tuks* mentioned are *Udgraha, Sthāyi, Melapaka, Antarā, Bhoga* and *Abhoga.*

Dhrupada became the nucleus for a two-pronged creative-preservative process of music-making. Traditions and canons of classic conformity and beauty of raga-manifestation through *anibaddha (ālāpa,* free improvisation on the *rāga* theme) and *nibaddha (bandish,* a synonym for *prabandha* in colloquial parlance) centred round *dhrupada.*

This exalted position was retained till about the mid-19th century, when a decline set in. While it continued to be held in high respect, it started losing much of its currency and popularity. Because of a mechanical adherence to its formal aspects, the presentation of *dhrupada* had acquired a stereotyped complexion. In the use of techniques and ornamentation, the *dhrupada* form had gained a somewhat rigid and an austere outlook. On the other hand *khayāl* with its novel, attractive features had been gaining ascendancy. In contrast to *dhrupada, khayāl* had a somewhat loose structure. Characterised by the use of livelier, more pleasing embellishments, with greater potential for individual creativity and a new look altogether, *khayāl* so overshadowed *dhrupada* as to almost dislodge it. *Dhrupada* for respect and past glory and *khayāl* for pursuit of enjoyment – a paradoxical situation indeed!

Musicians who through the centuries contributed to the *dhrupada* tradition as composers, performers and scholars include Nāyaka Gopāla, Nāyaka Baiju, Nāyaka Bakshu, Nāyaka Pandaviya, Swāmi Haridāsa, Irbāhim Adil Shah, Nāyaka Dhondi and

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

then of course Tānsen, Subhān (Sujaṇ) Khan, Jagannātha Kavirāi, Bilās Khan, Tān Tarang Khan, Baz Bahadur and Surat Sena. In the 19th century, we have such statwarts as Shyām Ranga-Saras Ranga, Chintamani Mishra, Harivallabha, Behram Khan, Ānand Kishore and Naval Kishore. In the latter part of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century occur Mohammad Ali Khan, Vazir Khan, Khwājā Ahmed, Ghulām Abbās Khan, Zākiruddin Allābande, Chandan Chaube, Karāmat Khān, Raojibuā Belbāgkar, the Maliks of Bihar, Bholānāth Pāthak, Nasiruddin Khan, Aghor Chakravarti and the Bisnupur representatives of Bengal. Among those who belong to our age and samples of whose rendering are available with us in the form of recordings, some prominent names are:

i. Ustād Rahimuddin and the Dāgar Saptak of today;
ii. Ustād Faiyyāz Khan and Ustād Vilāyat Hussain Khan (of the Agra gharana);
iii. Pandit Ramchatur Malik and Pandit Siyārām Tiwāri (of Bihar);
iv. Pandit Lakshman Prasad Chaube and Balji Chaturvedi (of the Braj tradition);
v. Pandit S.N. Ratanjankar (a disciple of Pandit Bhātkhande and Ustād Faiyyāz Khan);
vi. Harishankar Misra;
vii. Bharatji Vyas;
viii. Pandit Shiva Kumar and his son Phalguni Mitra (of the Betia tradition);
ix. K.G. Ginde, S.C.R. Bhat, Dinkar Kaikini (Pandit Ratanjankar's disciples);
x. Asgari Bai and Sumati Mutatkar (women exponents).

Now, a brief discussion on the language and verbal contents of *dhrupada.* Bhavabhatta's description regarding the language of *dhrupada* still holds good, substantially. It states that *dhrupada* is adorned by Sanskrit or *madhyadeshiya bhāshā,* i.e. Brajabhāsha.

Although one hardly finds *dhrupadas* composed in Sanskrit today, these are not totally absent from *dhrupada* lore. There are occasions, though rare, when a *dhrupada* in Sanskrit is presented by a well-versed dhrupadiya.

According to a belief prevalent among musicians and scholars, syllables like *tom, nom, ri, ra, na, tā, ra, na, ta, ra, na* — employed to hold and shape the expansive *ālāpa* preceding the *dhrupada* — have been lifted from an invocative *mantra* in Sanskrit. The *mantra* is *'Aum, ananta hari nārāyana tarana tārana tvam'.*

The bulk of *dhrupada* compositions are in Brajabhāsha referred to by Bhavabhatta as *Madhyadeshiya Bhāshā.* Born of a synthesis of Sanskrit and *apabhransha* dialects, Brajabhāshā is an expressive and widely appealing language. By virtue of its special texture of vowels, softened consonants, flowing movement and rich poetic poential, it is eminently suited to serve as a vehicle for music. Prevalent in a large portion of the Hindi heartland where *dhrupada* was born and flourished, Brajabhāshā came naturally to the makers of music. There are some songs with a sprinkling of Avadhi (another prominent variety of Hindi close to Brajabhāshā), Rājasthāni, Urdu and Punjābi. The language of the *dhrupadas* composed by Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijāpur in southern Maharashtra is

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Deccani Hindi.

The literary or *pada* aspect of musical composition was given due importance in the golden era of *dhrupada*. Music and poetry then had closer links. At the royal courts where both music and poetry were patronized, musicians were in contact with poets and had opportunities to cultivate their poetic flair to add to their expertise in music. The Pushtimārgiya Vaishnavite temples in Braj and Rājasthan, where music was an important aspect of daily worship, were also centres of high musical activity. Inspired devotees of poetic and musical attainments expressed their fervour through proliferative *vishnupada* – counterpart of *dhrupada* in the Vaishnavite music tradition.

Frequent contact between court and temple musicians enriched the complexion and content of secular traditions. Religious assemblies of Sufi saints employed music as a medium of spiritual upliftment. The Sufis also contributed to *dhrupada*.

The subject matter of *dhrupada* could be classified as:

i. Praise of gods and goddesses like Brahmā, Vishnu, Mahesh, Ganesha, Hanumān, Sri Rāma, Shri Krishna, Sarasvati, Durgā, Pārvati, Lakshmi and Kāli, to whom invocatory hymns were addressed; similar songs in praise of Allāh, Nabi Mohammad Pir, etc.

A subsidiary category would be songs intimately addressed to the deity – especially Lord Krishna – and songs extolling the importance and varieties of *bhakti* (devotion), moral virtues like truth, love and compassion.

ii. Praise of royal patrons, extolling their valour, generosity and greatness.

iii. *Nāyaka-nāyika* themes – songs depicting the eight *nayikās* detailed in Sanskrit poetics. Descriptions of female beauty and erotic themes also belong to this category.

iv. *Nāda-brahman* themes – songs describing the scope and terminology of music embodied in *shastric* lore.

v. Beauties of nature – songs depicting seasons like *vasanta* (spring), *varshā* (rainy season) and *grishma* (summer).

The compositional forms in present-day Hindustāni music comprise the *dhrupada-dhamāra* complex representing classic conformity, restraint, austerity and dignity, and the *khayāl-tarānā* complex characterized by a romantic element – a loosely bound rhythmic pattern, a shortened text, freedom in movement and freedom in the use of greater and more varied ornamentation. The *rāga* is the basis of melody for both; maintaining and unfolding the *rāga* form is imperative for both. However, it is to *dhrupada* that a major reference is made in respect of purity and precision. The other segment of Hindustāni music – lighter, more emotive and lyrical in complexion – is denoted by terms like light-classical or semi-classical. It comprises forms like *thumri-dādrā*, other allied varieties like *chaiti, kajri, sāvan jhoola* and *tappā*. The *ghazal* too, in which the beauty of the text finds appropriate musical expression, is eligible for inclusion in the light-classical group. In this complex there is a lyrical romantic element, and the verbal phrasing and tone are characterized by emotional abandon. An element of surprise rather than a disciplined commitment to the *rāga* structure characterizes light-classical songs. The *rāgas* employed are those best suited to emotive expression.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Now to *dhrupada* and *khayāl* for a closer view. As stated earlier, notwithstanding a decline in its popularity and its overshadowing by *khayāl, dhrupada* continued to hold its respected position as the eptiomc of musical classicism.

The *khayāl* in fact did not suddenly spring up as an entirely new mode. Sultān Hussain Sharki of Jaunpur, a contemporary of Rājā Mān Singh Tomar, imparted a refined shape to some of the already existing minor regional forms and brought *khayāl* to the fore in the 15th century. What emerged was a somewhat sophisticated variety of *khayāl,* probably the medium and fast-moving type. As mentioned in Persian works, it gained considerable acceptance and popularity.

The *dhrupada*-based slow *khayāl* came up only in the early 18th century and gained wider currency. Renowned exponents of *dhrupada* and Vinā like Niyāmat Khan Sadārang and his nephew Feroz Khan Adārang — musicians at the court of Muhammad Shah Rangile — devised a slow-moving structure for *khayāl,* retaining the *rāga* features and stateliness of *dhrupada,* partially freeing it from rhythmic rigidity. With a much smaller text in a more colloquial language and with more attractive ornamentation and technique, this *khayāl,* an offshoot of *dhrupada,* offered many new avenues of musical expression.

This was a turning point. On the one hand there were eminent musicians representing high *dhrupada* traditions who confined themselves to *ālāpa-dhrupada* alone. They looked upon *khayāl* as an impurity, a pollution, causing damage to the dignity of *rāga* forms. As against this, there were also learned *dhrupada-dhamāra* exponents who entered the *khayāl* arena and enriched *khayāl* with their deep insight and creativity. Their *khayāl* compositions and styles of performance bore an imprint of their *dhrupada* background. Several *khayāl* exponents of *dhrupada* moorings, by continuing the practice of *dhrupada-dhamāra* and by imparting training in the genre along with *khayāl,* initiated a new composite tradition.

This noteworthy feature brings out the mutually non-exclusive relation between *dhrupada* and *khayāl.* The dignity and classic purity initially derived from *dhrupada* was maintained in *khayāl* by its close proximity to *dhrupada.* This situation by and large obtained till the early decades of this century.

The structure and rendering of a *dhrupada*-based *khayāl* by a traditionally trained musician reveals a remarkable resemblance with *dhrupada.* There is a carefully worked-out loosening of the frame with embellishments like *khatkā. murki* and *zamzamā* inlaid at suitable places. The elaboration or *barhat* in its various stages moves with reference to the basic frame of the composition.

There is an interesting sidelight to the *dhrupada-khayāl* kinship. *Bāni,* denoting stylistic peculiarities, is a term specifically related to *dhrupada. Nauhār bāni* represented the *dhrupada-dhamāra* heritage of the Agra *gharānā.* Ustad Vilāyat Hussain Khan of this *gharānā* maintained that elements of the *Nauhār bāni* were transferred to the Agra style of *khayāl.* Indirectly therefore, he inferred, the *khayāl* of Agra also belongs to the *Nauhār bāni.* Similarly, according to a statement made by Ustad Allādiyā Khan to Pandit Govindrāo Tembe, the Ustad belonged to the *Dagur-bāni dhrupada* tradition, elements

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

of *Dagur bāni* having entered the style of *khayāl* evolved by him. In this way the idea of *bāni* was applied to *khayāl.*

Even the lighter varieties of the *thumri* group cannot be deemed totally devoid of *dhrupada* essence. Along with regional and folk streams, *dhrupada*— especially *dhamāra* with its colourful, emotive, lively abandon — has flowed into the *thumri* and *hori* forms, endowing them with a substance and beauty. Indeed, the entire complex of Hindustāni music is indebted to *dhrupada* for its *sthāyi-antarā* structure, and *dhrupada* in turn is beholden to its precursor, the *sālaga-suda prabandha.*

Till the early decades of this century, the importance of knowledge and some initial training in *dhrupada-dhamāra* — not only for vocalists but for instrumentalists as well — was fully realized. For instance, instrumentalists like Ustāds Allāuddin Khan, Hāfiz Ali Khan, Ashiq Ali Khan, Dabir Khan and B.K. Roy Chaudhuri — all representatives of great traditions — had large repertoires of *dhrupāda-dhamara* compositions. These, they declared, were the authentic bases of their *rāga* elaborations. They imparted to their illustrious pupils this secret of their command over *rāga* forms. Their disciples, renowned musicians today, proudly assert that they rely, for their *rāga* forms and *ālāpa* overtures on Sitar or Sarod, on the Been model with a *dhrupada* base. Renowned percussionists like Pandit Govindrāo Burhānpurkar, Sakhārāmji, Ambādāsji and Ayodhyā Prasādji depended, for insight in the art of providing accompaniment to singers and *beenkārs* on the structure and rhythmic pattern of their *dhrupada-dhamāra* stock, which they acquired as part of their training.

Pandit Bhātkhande, the genius and visionary that he was, realized the supreme importance of the oral traditions of *dhrupada-dhamāra,* followed by its successor the *dhrupada*-based *khayāl,* in Hindustāni classical music. He learnt a large number of *dhrupada-dhamāra* songs in different *rāgas* from worthy exponents and made a comprehensive collection. On the basis of a detailed scrutiny and analysis of *rāga* strucutres embodied in these compositions — as also their *khayāl* versions collected from well-known *gharānā* representatives — he based his theory and descriptions of *rāgas,* thus constructing a grammar and system for Hindustāni music. The vast and valuable body of literature created by Bhātkhande has provided a firm, broad base, a starting point for the further development of Hindustāni music and musicology.

Why should *dhrupada* then be almost banished from Hindustāni music? Till only a few decades ago, *dhrupada* was a strengthening base for *khāyal.* Has its value and relevance suddenly ceased? If not, would it not be worthwhile reviving the form?

Despite superficial understanding of *rāga* and lack of stylistic depth and coherence, the increased facility and dexterity, especially in faster movements, noticed among young musicians today indicates that something essential is receding into oblivion. Does this phenomenon have something to do with the elimination of the *dhrupada* link? These are pertinent questions which need to be probed.

It may be pointedly mentioned here that advocating revival of the *dhrupada* link does not amount to putting the clock back, precluding new creation. On the contrary, acquaintance with the essence of *dhrupada* should provide a continuum and a stronger foundation for creators of new melodies. In fact, training in *dhrupada* cultivates a way of

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

thinking based on 'commanding form'.

There has of late years been a growing interest in the *dhrupada* form, and ever-increasing opportunities for its performance on the radio, the concert platform, conferences and festivals both at home and abroad. It is to the credit of the votaries and exponents of *dhrupada* that in a climate of apathy, they have continued their pursuit with conviction and devotion. With the tide changing in their favour, they are not lagging behind in projecting the deeper-grooved, austere grandeur of the *dhrupada* form.

However, there is need to ask some vexing questions. Is, for instance, the *ālāpa* preceding the composition tending to become too long-drawn and analytic, sometimes failing to sustain the interest of even responsive audiences, at times eroding the integrated character of the *rāga?* Are all *rāgas* suited to systematic note-by-note elaboration? Should not the character, range and complexity of a *rāga* be a valid consideration while choosing the mode and extent of its elaboration? Is not there some practical wisdom in the old saying among musicians that the *rāga* remains a *rāga* only as long as it sustains interest?

In the treatment of *dhrupada-dhamāra,* what are the possibilities for improvement in respect of blending of verbal and tonal contents and rhythmic variations and patterns? Is it proper to ignore the melodic aspect during rhythmic gymnastics? Should not there be any difference between the treatment of *dhrupada* and *dhamāra?*

The grand old Pakhāwaj is the percussion instrument prescribed for *dhrupada* accompaniment. There are innumerable varieties of *parans, chakradāras, farmāishis, tihāis* and so on in the Pakhāwaj repertoire. Many of these are for solo performance. But when it comes to accompanying *dhrupada,* does it not become imperative for the Pakhawaj player to provide appropriate support without overshadowing the voice? Should he not consciously strive to revive the principles of good acompaniment, cultivating an alertness of mind to cope with any musical situation during a performance?

The dynamics of Hindustāni music have been throwing up new forms, new modes, new styles. One must march ahead with the times, belong to one's own age. But at the same time let us not relegate to oblivion the works of the masters who were our models. A discerning, respectful interest in these should open up rewarding avenues of exploration and delight in a form of music which is old, yet often newer than the new. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The Khayāl*

Susheela Misra

This is the age of the *khayāl* in Hindustāni music. How changing human tastes, vogues, and fashions are! Musical tastes are no exception. Our far-sighted music scholars and ancestors made provision for such changes since ancient times. The author of *Sangita Ratnākara* must have taken this into account when he defined *Deshi* (or secular) music thus: *"Deshe deshe janānām yadruchyā hridayaranjakam"* (That is secular music which pleases the tastes of the people of different places or regions).

Until a few decades ago, the general belief was that *khayāl* being an Arabic word, the very style must have been a contribution of Amir Khusrau, since he enriched various aspects of Hindustāni music prolifically. *Khayāl* is an Arabic word meaning 'idea', 'thought', or 'imagination'. There is no doubt that the *khayāl* evolved as a reaction against the austerity and rigidity of the *dhrupada* style. In *Dhruvapada* (or *dhrupada*), the lyrics are lofty, and their development inside the strict *tāla* circle without flippant embellishments is of prime importance. The singer has to have a powerful voice and absolute control over breath and *tāla*. It allows for no flights of fancy, nor does it afford much scope for the full range of embellishments that a trained voice is capable of. Hence people must have got bored of its austerity and its lack of ornamentation. *Dhrupada* gradually lost its popularity and had to give way to *khayāl*, "a classico-romantic form" combining the classicism of *dhrupada* with the romanticism of *thumri* and allowing for greater freedom of improvisation and flights of fancy within the bounds of the chosen *rāga* and *tāla*. The *khayāl* singer can give full rein to his *'khayāl'* — fancy or imagination — and has scope for many vocal embellishments. The same *khayāl* is interpreted and elaborated differently by each singer. Herein lies the fresh charm of those oft-repeated and sometimes centuries-old *khayāls*.

It is now believed by many that the seeds of the *khayāl* existed in ancient types of musical composition such as the five types mentioned by Sarangadeva in his *Sangita Ratnākara — shuddha, bhinna, gaudi, vesara* and *sādhārani*. Certain ornamentations like *khatkā, murki, meend,* etc. existed in a rudimentary form in *sādhārani* and these have been incorporated in *khayāl*. Even more convincing is the opinion of an erudite music scholar like Thakur Jaidev Singh who has arrived at the conclusion that *khayāl* actually sprouted from the ancient *roopakālapti* form mentioned in *Sangita Ratnākara*. Maintaining the purity of the *rāga*, the *bols* and *tāla*, the introduction and gradual unfolding of *ālāpa*, and the frequent return to the *mukhdā* (the first line of the song that is repeated after each elaboration) are said to be features common to *roopakālapti* and the *khayāl* style. The *sthayi bhanjani* and *roopak bhanjani* (corresponding to *bol ālāps*

*Reproduced from *Sangeet Natak*, journal of Sangeet Natak Akademi.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

and *bol tāns*) are also common features, the only difference being that the *khayāl* allows more freedom in these aspects.

Hazrat Amir Khusrau is often mentioned as the originator of both *qawwāli* and *khayāl*. This view, however, is not supported by historical facts. Even before the birth of Amir Khusrau in the year 1253 A.D., *qawwāli*-singing was already an integral part of the Sufi cult in India as an instrument of worship and as an expression of devotional fervour. With his many-faceted creativity and high musical imagination, Amir Khusrau infused the *qawwāli* with a new complexion and shape, making its singing very much more musical, attractive and imaginative. With an added Indian ethos. *qawwāli* became more conducive to spreading all over the mystic message of the Sufis. This *qawwāli* gave rise to a type of *khayāl* in the shaping of which Amir Khusrau seems to have made a substantial contribution.

In course of time, from this *qawwāli*-based *khayāl,* referred to sometimes as *Khusrau-bani khayāl,* emerged the Qawwal Bachche gharana of *khayāl*. Thus, although not in the role of the originator as such, the contribution of Amir Khusrau stands out as positive and remarkable.

Another type of *khayāl* of the medium tempo was developed by the Shirki rulers of Jaunpur mainly by remoulding the regional varieties like the *chutkula prabandha.* This was in the 15th and 16th centuries. The *Ain-e-Akbari* mentions a few *khayāls* and *tarānās* as delightful mixtures of Persian and Indian styles. By the 18th century, however, the *dhrupada*-based *khayāl* in slow tempo was evolved, relegating *dhrupada* into the background in respect of popularity and common appeal.

The credit for the efflorescence of the *khayāl* goes to Sadārang (Niyāmat Khan), and Adārang (Feroz Khan) who flourished under the regime of Muhammad Shah Rangile. Sadārang was a wizard on the Been, and he was a *vainika* descended from Tānsen through the lineage of the latter's daughter Saraswati. Although he was a highly respected musician in the magnificent darbār of Muhammad Shah Rangile, a tradition that irked his pride was that in spite of his mastery over the *vīnā,* he always had to sit behind the *dhrupada* singer of the court, as the *vīnā* was only an instrument of accompaniment! There is also a story that he infuriated the emperor by refusing to play a duet with some Sārangi maestro because he considered it infra dig for a *vainika* belonging to Tansen's lineage to perform with a *sārangiya.* The emperor, in his rage, dismissed Niyāmat Khan from his court and banished him from Delhi. It is believed that Niyāmat Khan lived incognito in Lucknow for many years, hiding from the enraged emperor. It was during this period of exile that he evolved the *khayāl* style which was destined to make him immortal in the field of Hindustāni music. In Lucknow, he chose two young boys, Bahādur Khan and Dulhā Khan (sons of a *dhrupadiyā* who died prematurely) as his disciples, and trained them in the new *khayāl* style. It is indeed strange that although Niyāmat (Sadarang) is today famous as the originator, propagator, and prolific composer of hundreds of *khayāls* which are popular to this day, he never sang them himself, nor did he teach them to any member of his own family. This must have been due to the snobbish attitude of the *dhrupadiyās* and *vainikas* of those times who looked down upon other forms of classical music. The two 'Miyan brothers'

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

(Bahādur & Dulhā) became extremely popular for their *khayāl*-singing and before long they got a chance to sing before Emperor Muhammad Shah Rangile. The latter was so fascinated by the beauty of the new compositions and their embellishments that he was eager to meet their Ustad. At last, Niyāmat Khan's identity was disclosed and the emperor welcomed him back into his court. From then on Niyāmat, who had assumed the pseudonym Sadārang, became a great favourite of his royal patron. He was asked to train a large number of disciples including some of the young ladies of the royal household in the art of *khāyal*-singing. In most of his compositions, we find Sadārang's name coupled with that of Muhammad Shah Rangile: "Muhammad Shah Sadārangile."

The *dhrupada tālas* were set aside, and the slow or *vilambit khayāls* were set in *tālas* like *ektāl vilambit, Tilwādā, Jhoomrā, Ādāchautāl, Rupaka* and so on. The medium tempo or *madhya laya,* and fast *(drut) khayāls* are generally set in *Tritāl, Ektāl, Jhaptāl,* etc. The lofty, philosophical themes of the Dhruvapadas were also pushed away in favour of romantic, erotic, and lyrical *sahitya* which appealed to the pleasure-loving royal patron and his courtiers.

Another unforgettable *khayāl* composer who vied with Sadārang in the prolific composition of *khayāls* was Adārang (Feroz Khan), a close relative (nephew and son-in-law) of Sadārang. Adārang's *khayāls* are exquisite compositions of philosophic content. The trends set by Sadārang and Adārang were followed by numerous other composers such as Mahārang (Bhoopat Khan, son of Niyāmat Khan), Har-rang, Krishnadās and others. Coming to more recent times, we have a large number of accomplished *vāggeyakaras* who have been excellent performing artistes, or scholars, or both. Among them may be mentioned the names of Daraspiyā (Mehboob Khan), Vinodpiyā (Tasadduq Hussain), Prempiyā (Ustad Faiyyāz Khan), Prānpiyā (Ustad Vilāyat Hussain Khan), Pandit Bhātkhande (Chatur), Sujān (Pandit S.N. Ratanjankar), Sabrang (Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan), Pandit Govind Narayan Natu, Inayat Hussain Khan, Pandit Nivruttibua Sarnaik, Kumar Gandharva, Pandit Jagannathbua Purohit, S.A. Mahadkar (Sughar), M.V. Kalvint and many others.

Many of the old *khayāls* were perhaps composed by persons who did not pay much attention to the dignity of lyric. They were either not well-versed in the language, or perhaps the themes they chose were suitable for their times. Several of these *khayāls* were built around themes of mundane eroticism. In the hedonistic court environment of those times, such songs must have been topical and popular. But when our music stepped out of these exclusive darbārs and mehfils right into the glare of public concerts, Akāshvani and Doordarshan, the themes began to sound anachronistic, embarrassing, even indecent sometimes. Hence today's talented composers (*vaggeyakāras*) of *khayāls* have paid special attention to the *sahitya.* The *bandishes* of scholarly musicians like Pandit Bhātkhande, Pandit Ratanjankar, Kumar Gandharva, Pandit G.N. Natu and others are a delight to sing because they combine dignified lyrics with beautiful *svara*-combinations.

Slow (*vilambit*) *khayāls* are elaborated in a serious, serene contemplative mood, and the atmosphere is one of sublime tranquility. Most *khayāls* consist of two stanzas known as the *sthāyi* and *antarā,* while a few have four stanzas (*sthāyi, antarā, sanchāri* and

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

abhog) like *dhrupadas*. The *sthāyi* commences with the opening phrase or the 'face' of the song, aptly known as the *mukhdā*. This is the burden of the song and is couched in the most typical note-combination of the particular *rāga*. Therefore, it is usually possible to identify the *rāga* as soon as one hears the *mukhdā* of the *khayāl*. After each round of elaboration the singer returns to the *mukhdā* which contains the dominant note of the *rāga*, usually coinciding with the *sam*, the point of stress, "the merging-point of melody and rhythm". After the leisurely elaboration of the *sthāyi*, the musician goes on to the *antarā* which contains the higher notes of the *rāga*. This gradual passing on from *sthayi* to *antarā* is an unobtrusive process; by the time the singer takes up the *antarā*, his (or her) voice is warmed up and ready to tackle the higher notes with ease. The fast or *drut* or *chhotā khayāl* is rendered in a more relaxed and playful mood. The singer descends from the sublime and contemplative mood of the slow *khayāl* and creates a lighter mood with a profusion of quick *tānas, bol* patterns, a few cross-rhythms or quick sallies with the *tablā* accompanist.

The *khayāl* singer has to undergo long years of voice exercise and initiation into the complicated world of *rāgas* and *tālas* before he (or she) can become a singer of any worth. Even then, a merely technically correct rendering of *khayāl* with vocal gymnastics thrown in cannot have any appeal. The singer has to reveal originality and creativity, and the singing has to be suffused with *rasa*, or emotional flavour. The highest form of classical music is that which is at once intellectually satisfying and emotionally appealing. As one critic wrote: "The Indian singer has to be a poet also."

Each *khayāl* performance is a daring flight on the wings of creativity. The lyric is brief and it reflects a mood. The framework of the song is like a structure of bone; the *rāga* and *rasa* are the flesh and blood and life that have to be created through the artiste's improvisational skill. Only then can the *khayāl* become alive and kindle responses in the listerner who is a *rasika. Khatkās, murkis, gamaks, meends, sargams,bol-tānas, zamzamā,* etc. are only a few of the many embellishments that the *khayāl*-singer uses to adorn his singing. In a valuable article entitled '*Khayāl Gāyan ke Sthool Niyam'*, Pandit Vishnu Narain Bhātkhande has described the minutest details to be followed in the step-by-step elaboration of the *vilambit* and *drut khayāls.*

The subject matter of *khayāls* is varied. They may be in praise of gods or royal patrons; they may centre around divine or human love; they may be devotional, philosophical or seasonal. With the aid of the lyric and within the framework of the *rāga* and the *tāla,* the *khayāl* exponent has to pour emotional colour into his song. Without this *rasa-siddhi,* his music will descend to a mere vocal display without any appeal. The chosen *rāga* should be pleasing, and the rendering of the *sāhitya* should result in aesthetic pleasure besides intellectual appeal. It is the lack of emotional appeal in the art of many performing musicians which often makes classical music mechanical and lifeless. A cultivated voice, sound training, creative talent, rich imagination, aesthetic sense — all these and more are needed to make a good *khayāl* singer.

The language of *khayāl* shows great variety ranging from chaste Hindi, Persianized Hindi, Brajabhāshā, Rājasthāni, Punjābi, and so on. The singer must understand the meaning thoroughly before trying to interpret it for others.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

A factor that has added spice and variety to *khāyāls* is the existence of the numerous *gharānās*. When artistes were jealously nurtured in isolation by their possessive royal patrons, each family of Ustāds carefully preserved the specialities of their style and handed them down orally to their own family members exclusively. Each *gharānā* (from *'ghar'* or family) developed its own typical style of voice production, elaboration, types of *tāna* and stress on given *svaras, bols,* or *tālas.* Thus have emerged many interesting *gharānās,* and their number seems to be swelling with the passage of time. In the old days the tendency was to stick to one *gharānā* strictly. But today's musicians are not really fanatical sticklers to their *gharānās,* because they get plenty of opportunities to hear one another in various parts of the country. Each *gharānā* merits a chapter by itself.

The Qawwāl-Bachche *gharānā* is considered the oldest of these. Sāvant and Bula, two brothers (one deaf and the other dumb) who suddenly emerged as great musicians through the blessing of a Muslim saint (Hazrat Khwājā-e-Khazgan) are believed to be the earliest exponents of this *gharāna.* In fact, the famous Gwalior gharana is considered an offshoot of this *gharānā.* The other well-known *khayāl gharānās* are Agra, Atrauli, Kirana, Jaipur, Delhi, Patiala, Sahaswan, Bhendibazar, Saharanpur, Shamchaurasi, and so on. Each *gharānā* has produced a galaxy of luminaries — too numerous to be listed in a brief article. From time to time outstanding exponents of each *gharānā* have given a new orientation to their respective schools, enriched them, and taken them to unprecedented heights of popularity.

The *khayāl* style itself has changed considerably in the last hundred years or so. S.C. Chakravarty has written:

> During the last 200 years or so, many experiments have been made in the musical development of *khayāl* which by its very nature allows for such experiments. As far as I remember, *khayāl* was simpler in structure, using more or less the embellishments which are associated with the *dhrupada* variety. *Khayāl* has all along been keeping its doors open to...contemporary forms of music whether old or newly born...

Elements of *thumri* ("even the *lachak* of *thumri*") and folk music have also been incorporated into the *khayāl* now: Shri Chakravarty gave a warning in the following words:

> Changes which are not anarchical are a good sign of real progress.. But, in the case of *khayāl* they are interfering with the very foundation of the style and the form, and, if unchecked, are likely to lead to disaster.

Eminent instrumentalists also have been considerably influenced by the *khayāl* style. In his article on Influence of *khayāl* on instrumental music, the accomplished Sitar artiste Bimal Mukherji wrote: The *Masitkhāni gat* is the result of the *khayāl* technique as applied to instrumental music." Many leading instrumentalists of today like Ustads Vilāyat Khan (Sitar), Amjad Ali Khan (Sarod), violinists M.S. Gopalakrishnan, N. Rajam, V.G. Jog and others take pride in declaring that they have enriched their *bāj* by incorporating the *gāyaki ang* of *khayāl* and *thumri.* Even the *beenkārs* of old, who were staunch supporters of the *dhrupada* style, "were the first to come to grips with the *khayāl* style of music and sucessfully remodelled their entire style of play on the basis of rolling

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

meends and *gamak tānās*" (Bimal-Mukherji). Many other types of *tāna* typical of *khayāl* — *sapāt, vakra, halak, gamak* — have also been incorporated in instrumental music.

All this proves the pervasive influence of the *khayāl* style of Hindustāni music today. While *dhrupada* revives, *khayāl* will hold sway for a long time to come. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The Tradition of Thumri

Rita Ganguly

Throughout the history of India, right from Vedic times, there is evidence that women have performed music and dance in rituals and in drama. Apart from this primarily ritualistic context, there was another stream in which these arts were cultivated as a hereditary profession, by men as well as women — as an aesthetic device for the entertainment of royalty and nobility.

Music and dance, initially, were subsidiary but significant parts of the total art of theatre. In course of time, they came to acquire importance as independent disciplines segregated from the dramatic context. It was inevitable that forms intended to provide aesthetic satisfaction should have diverged from their initially ritualistic or histrionic purpose, attaining an independent status.

The arts of music and dance developed, on the one hand, as an oral tradition through the *guru-shishya parampara,* practical training being imparted by each generation to the next. On the other hand, knowledge pertaining to these arts was, over the years, classified and codified in the form of theoretical or *shastric* works. These two facets can be regarded as essentially complementary to each other.

The professional woman singer and dancer, the *ganikā* or courtesan, was accorded considerable recognition and high social status. There is ample evidence in literature that she combined in herself both knowledge and refinement as well as a variety of skills and graces.

Ancient literary and musicological texts contain many references to romantic and emotively expressive forms of music and dance that embodied lyricism and delicacy. It should not be thought that these were exercises in hedonism alone: aesthetic delight was seen also as a means of attaining a joyful identity with nature and with the cosmos itself.

There is a clear ideational link between these ancient modalities of music and dance and today's light-classical forms such as *thumri.* The old philosophical rationale may not be much in evidence, but there can be no doubt about their affinity.

This article deals with a special genre in contemporary Indian music — the *thumri* and related light-classical forms. The *thumri* is essentially communicative, with many variations of *vāk* or the spoken word. Its content is poetical, and it is rooted firmly in the tradition of Hindustāni classical music. A particular blend of temperament and training is required of the artiste who renders a *thumri* or other forms of light-classical music.

Great singers such as Ustads Abdul Karim Khan of the Kirānā *gharānā,* Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and Barkat Ali Khan of the Patiālā *gharānā,* and Faiyyaz Khan of the Agra *gharānā* — all recognized masters of classical forms — were partial to the *thumri.* Several reasons for this can be identified. The *thumri* is endowed with flexibility,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

allowing freedom to the singer; it permits the expression of a degree of sheer joy that *khayāl* or *dhrupada* do not allow. Its romantic character gives it a charm all its own. In the musical context it can be regarded as one half of the *nara-nāri* ('man-woman') concept, similar to the Chinese notion of *'yang'* and *yin,* which holds that the two are interdependent and inseparable and together constitute the totality of the universe.

The bases of classical aesthetics have been set out in the *Nātyashāstra. Rasa* (a term difficult to translate, but essentially signifying aesthetic delight) is regarded as supreme. There are different components of *rasa,* and their presence in appropriate form is essential if the requirements of aesthetics are to be met. Music, when it grew into a discipline in its own right, retained this tenet of aesthetics.

Rasa was essential to *abhinayātmaka sangita,* as it was to the other arts. *Abhinaya* consisted of four facets: *āhārya,* or costume and decor; *āngika* or bodily movement, gesture, and facial expression; *vāchika* or word, text and pronunciation; and *sātvika,* mental and physical reaction.

The *thumri* and its allied forms known as *dādrā, kajri, hori, chaiti, tappā* and *ghazal* (in traditional rendering) have a unique blend of folk lyric combined with the classical pattern of singing. While the abstraction of *rāga* remains an important musical element, the emphasis is not so much on the purity of *rāga* as on creating an emotive form (*rupa*) through words and melody.

There has been some speculation on the etymology of the word *thumri.* The word is commonly believed to be onomatopoeic, *'thum'* representing the sound of anklet bells or footfall. *'Thumak'* is a term to describe the gait of a person. *'Ri',* or the next half of the word, is sought to be established as *rijhana,* or ecstatically charming. It appears that these lyrics were actually part of representational acting or dance as also part of popular epic recitation and enactment in temples by *kathakas* or raconteurs; they were later part of Kathak dance, and still later of musicians who graduated beyond the dance, keeping for themselves the exquisite lyric.

There are two major types of *thumri: bol banāo ki thumri* and *bol bānth ki thumri. Bol banāo ki thumri* is sung in *vilambit* (slow) *laya* (tempo) set to the following *tālas* or time measures: *Jatha* of 14 and 16 beats, *chāchar, deepchandi* of 14 beats, *dheema tritāla* of 16 beats, *jhaptāla* of 10 beats and *rupaka* of 7 beats. (Singers of Punjab *ang thumri* sometimes sing in *dādrā* of 6 beats or *kaharvā* of 8 beats.) By and large, the compositions are restricted to *rāgas Khamāj, Tilang, Pilu, Gārā, Desh, Tilak-Kāmod, Jhinjhoti, Paraj, Kalingda, Barwa, Basant, Sohini, Jogia, Shivaranjani, Kirwani* and *Bhairavi.*

Bol bānth ki thumri is rendered in *madhya laya* (medium tempo) in *teentala, sitārkhāni* and *jhaptāla.* These compositions were generally composed for dance or were inspired by instrumental music and its character. Thus they have the character of a *gat* tightly woven in a two-to-four-line *sthāyi* and an equally balancing *antarā.* Very often the name of the composer occurs in the second half of the composition, the *antarā.* Great composers like Bindādin Mahārāj of the Lucknow *gharānā* of Kathak are supposed to have composed as many as 5000 *thumris;* Lalan Piyā of Farrukhabad is credited with having composed 1300 *thumris.* Kadar Piyā and Sanat Piyā also composed hundreds of

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

compositions many of which are still sung today. These compositions are not confined to the few *rāgas* mentioned earlier; many of them are in *rāgas* like *Darbāri, Bahār, Adānā-bahār, Basant-Bahār, Kedār, Gaud-sārang* and so on. Many of these compositions have been wrongly classified as *chhotā khayāl* or *drut khayāl*, the fast number sung along with the *khayāl*.

The *thumri* as a lyrical composition has two main phases: *sthāyi*, often in refrain, and *antarā*. The first phase, the *sthāyi*, generally consists of one line describing an emotional state of mind that is its grip and base. A particular *rasa-bhāva* is the main involvement of each composition describing a *nāyikā* or heroine. *Sthāyi* is generally composed in *madhya-saptak* (middle octave) and *mandra-saptak* (lower octave).

Antarā, the second half of a *thumri*, is composed in *madhya-saptak* and *tar-saptak* (higher octave). While it incorportes typical phrases of the *rāga*, the *nyāsa* or pivotal note is emphasized by an ascending order of notes rising towards the high octave. The text of *antarā* conveys reasons for the emotional state of the *nāyikā* described in the *sthāyi*.

The *thumri* is textually so arranged that each section, either of a word or phrase, is known as *khanda* (division) or *bidāri*, communicating variant shades of mental and emotional interpretation. Consider the line:

Piyā	*ko*	*bhejo*	*sandesā*	*bairi*	*papiharā*
the lover	to	send	a message	oh enemy	bird
6	5	1	2	3	4

Here the word *sandesā* or message can convey the sense of spiritual message, far beyond the sensuous, erotic. The word *bhejo*, to send, can mean to give, to take, communicate, explain, surrender. Thus the *bidāri* area makes for wide textual interpretation.

In *bol banāo ki thumri* after the *sthāyi* and *antarā*, the Tablā accompanist plays *laggi* which is eight times faster than the original tempo. To the accompaniment of this *laggi*, the dancers used to do a pure dance sequence; those who confine their performance to singing repeat the refrain of the *thumri* along with a variety of sprightly short *tānas*. At the end of the *laggi*, the singer returns to the original slow tempo and concludes with the first line of the *sthāyi*.

Nearest to the human voice in its melodic movement and endowed with bewitching sweetness, the Sarangi has been intimately associated with *thumri* both for accompaniment and for teaching purposes. Sārangi and Tablā cover the melodic and rhythmic aspects respectively.

Thumri singers were usually associated with temple rituals. Practically all the Indian princely states employed professional lady singers to perform *ārati* and *vandanā* morning and evening. The same women singers also performed for royalty as court singers. *Dhrupadiyās* were also employed as court musicians. Thus mutual influence was to be expected. The *layakāri* of *dhrupada* was incorporated in the *thumri* of *dhrupada anga*, particularly in *bol bānth ki thumri*. Some vocal mannerisms — for example, in the use of vowels — are common to both. Since the text of *dhrupada* was religio-philosophical, *thumri* received a secure foundation of the highest Indian thought. Many

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

kathakiyās of professional music and dance families sing *bol bānth ki thumris* in the *dhrupada anga.*

The teachers who trained *thumri* singers were themselves often fine Sārangi players. Abdul Karim Khan, Abdul Wahid Khan, Amir Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, were all competent *Sarangi* players who later achieved eminence as vocalists. Abdul Karim Khan was noted as a *thumri* singer. Abdul Wahid Khan of the Kirānā *gharānā* trained many *tawaifs.* Begum Akhtar was his disciple. Musicians from the Banaras professional families played the Sārangi and trained many well-known *tawaifs* of Banaras. *Bol banāo ki thumri* incorporated much of the style of the *Sārangi.* This treatment is sometime called *khayal-anga thumri.*

Though it has become the fashion for *khayāliyās* to sing a *thumri* at the end of a recital, the basic training and voice culture for singing *thumri* is totally different from that of *khayāl.* Here the requirement is of utterance with a feminine, beautiful, subtle touch, along with a delicate voice throw. A *thumri* singer is first trained in the style of *tappā,* because this allows flexibility of the voice in swift note-sequences and a light voice throw. This particular training is easily imparted again with the help of the Sārangi, the only instrument which is capable of producing such fine filigrees of swift note patterns. The basic pattern of *tāna* in *khayāl* demands a different voice throw and voice culture. The Banāras school has specialized in integrating *tappā* nuances into its slow, expansive *thumri* treatment. The *tappā* technique is invested with a typical *gamaka* in a fast sequence and this is a characteristic of the Banāras *anga.* There is, of course, the *tappā anga* in *bol bānth ki thumri* where the entire composition is tightly woven with fast note patterns, hardly allowing breathing space till a whole cycle is completed. There are compositions by Lalan Piyā and Kadar Piyā using this technique.

The musical techniques used in *thumri* rendering, apart from *ālāpti* are *sapāta tānā* and *chhoot tāna.* In *chhoot tāna* the melodic pattern is repeated in quick succession, mostly in a descending movement starting from the last vowel of the phrase. The sound treatment is embellished with *murki, khatkā, zamzamā, khanak, meend, gamak* and *pukār.* All this freedom to interpret a poem in song must have a central discipline. Here aesthetic imagination plays a very important part. The juxtaposition must be truly judged. The language of *thumri* is often a dialect which has affinities with Hindi, one of the languages derived from Sauraseni, a major language of song in classical Sanskrit drama, according to Bharata's *Nātyashāstra.*

Thumris have been composed in Braj, Avadhi, Bagheli, Bundeli, Bhojpuri, Maghi, Maithili, Mewāti, Mārwādi, as well as in Khari-boli (colloquial Hindi).

Singers who also danced explored the expressive possibilities of a *thumri* composition. The *thumri* sung by dancers was known as the *gat bhāva ki thumri.* The texts of these compositions were in *khandas* (sections) and each section put forth an idea, with the possibility of many interpretations. This enabled the performer to express the whole phrase in multi-dimensional form and with great emotive power, at times rising to the spiritual level. This variety of *thumri* ideally suited a dancer-singer. *Bol bath ki thumri,* used for dance, was called *gata bhāva ki thumri, gata* standing for movement.

Practically all women musicians of the recent past, such as Husnā Bāi, Malkā Jān,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Gauhar Jān, Zohrā Baī, Vidyā Dhari Bāi, Rasoolan Bāi, Moti Bāi, Jaddan Bāi, Rajeshwari, as also my two teachers Siddheshwari Devi and Begum Akhtar, had a thorough training in Kathak dance and *abhinaya* which they performed in their younger days. Subsequently they became vocalists of repute, when their music itself acquired dramatic dimensions. They performed a *mehfil* (soirée) of *thumri* lasting as much as between six to ten hours. Today on the concert platform *thumri* is placed — like a savoury dish — right at the end of the programme. Yet, ironically, it is for this delectable morsel that the audience eagerly waits.

In a soirée a *thumri* would normally be followed by *dādrā*. There is one type of *dādrā* in which the refrain is elaborted further with *sher* (couplet) or *kavitva* woven into it. In the most popular or common type, the lyric describes a particular scene or episode. There is an interesting emphasis on the lilt of the rhythm, with varied patterns. In *dādrā* singing, the phrasing is short and crisp. The changing season or *bārāmāsa* (songs of the twelve months) is well represented in its repertoire. A major portion of an evening's concert could consist of *kajri* (songs of the rainy season) or *hori* (songs of spring season and the Holi festival), or *chāiti* (songs of approaching summer). The choice of songs is generally related to the season in which a particular performance takes place.

In *tappā* the singer displays his or her musical skill through fast *tānas* and complicated vocal manoeuvres woven into the *tāla*. A well-known composer in this form was Shorie Miyān. Several of his compositions in the Punjabi-Multani dialect are still in vogue today. *Tappās* are also available in Rājasthāni, Bengali, Braj and Avadhi dialects. A large number of *tappās* in Bengali have been composed by Nidhu Babu who was inspired by Shorie Miyān's work. It is believed that this musical genre has grown from the folk songs of the camel riders of desert caravans. In all these lighter varieties, the ethos and the lyrical content is mainly of an erotic nature (*shringāra rasa*) woven into the varied moods of nature and the seasons.

A musical form akin to *thumri* is *ghazal*, lyrics composed by poets or *shāyars* in the Persian and Urdu languages. These fall into five, seven or eleven sections known as *sher*. The first section — *matla* — establishes the poetic metre, known as *radif kafia;* the other sections, while independent in idea, form an integral part of the whole *ghazal*. The last section is called *makta* where the poet's name is mentioned. Rendered in song, the *ghazal* has strict musical norms, though set to simple *tālas* like *dādrā, kaharvā* or *rupaka*. The melodic structure of the *ghazal* is usually based on classical *rāgas*, larger in number than those employed in *thumri*.

In a way, the *ghazal* is a further extension of *thumri*-singing as it engages various emotions and stresses, human experience and philosophical concepts. The *ghazal* temporizes, questions, seeks further realms; the ultimate *manzil* or mansion of truth is always yet to be arrived at. Some *ghazals* are only complete through musical rendering. Their business and engagement is with diction, breaking of phrases, creating word images. Thus the *ghazal* becomes highly intellectual. The broad framework is of a particular *rāga* yet the rendition takes leaps into the realms of other *rāgas*. The *ghazal* has remained through the centuries an abiding yet contemporary musical experience.

The pioneering figure in Banāras-*anga thumri*, who influenced and changed the

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

complexion of *thumri*-singing, was the young and brilliant vocalist Moizuddin Khan Saheb, born in 1875. A child prodigy, he was the son of a great woman singer, Zebrunnisa Begum. He engaged in competitive feats of imitative virtuosity with the *tawaifs* and gradually developed his own style of singing. It was with him, towards the end of the 19th century, that *thumri*-singing reached its peak. Pleased with his talent, the great harmonium player and composer Bhaiyya Sāheb Ganpat Rao – who had migrated from Gwalior to Banaras – trained him as his chief disciple. He composed many new *vilambit thumris* for his disciple. Moizuddin Khan is known today as the father of the Banāras *anga*. His disciple, Badi Moti Bāi, one of our greatest *thumri* singers, died in the early sixties. Around his music emerged a special *bāj* or style of playing Tablā known as *poorab bāj*. There was hardly any *thumri* singer of his time who was not influenced by Moizuddin Khan.

The accompaniment of the Sārangi to *thumri* was an integral part of the performance. While the singer improvised, weaving different musical patterns into the major melodic structure, the Sārangi, by repeating the same phrases, provided an element of echo in another tonal dimension. This repetition also created a base for further improvisation.

Traditionally, a *tawaif* was trained by male *gurus* or ustads who invariably imparted their training through the Sārangi. This instrument helped a male singer train a female singer, whose voice range was always higher than his own. The training of the *tawaif* started at a very early age. Kathak dance was the first art a girl learnt, whereas a boy was trained in Tabla. During adolescence, the musical training began for girls, while boys were trained in vocal music for a short period. At the time of voice change the boys were given training in Sārangi. In conformity with the *guru-shishya paramparā,* there was a *gandā-bandhan* ceremony. This ceremony consisted of the tying of a sacred thread on the wrist of the *shishya* by the *guru* as a mark of his formally having accepted him/her as his pupil. At the end of the training a *guru-dakshinā* (gift of money, vestments, jewellery, etc.) was generally given to the teacher for the training imparted.

By tradition, the *thumri* belongs to the culture of the *kothā* (residence and salon of the courtesan), where it was nurtured and professionally pursued, and where it flourished. Today, however, the *thumri* has come out of its exclusive confines and is taught in homes, in institutions, even at universities, along with classical forms like *dhrupada* and *khayāl*. It is performed at public concerts by accomplished musicians, both men and women.

In this context a brief account of my own association with some of the greatest exponents of *thumri* would be of relevance and interest. I had initial lessons in Kathak dance and *thumri* from Guru Shambhu Mahārāj. I then had the good fortune to come under the tutelege of Siddheshwari Devi and Begum Akhtar, the two most eminent names in the realm of the *thumri*. While one was strict and demanding and the other lenient and permissive, both were most affectionate and generous in teaching. It was at their concerts, where I accompanied and sang with them, that I truly imbibed the techniques, nuances and subtleties of *thumri* – rooted in tradition yet creative, ever-new, ever-charming. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Composition and Improvisation in Indian Music

Bhaskar Chandavarkar

In most music cultures composers are considered to be the most respected creative exponents of the art. Composing music is perhaps one of the most cherished things that the human spirit has been able to achieve, and therefore is a highly regarded activity. Performers of music, however, are not always so fortunate. Indeed some cultures treat them as mere entertainers and their social status sometimes is unenviable. Yet not every music culture can easily differentiate between a performer and a composer.

Composers are described as people who can logically and meaningfully organize sound to create expressive musical pieces. In the Indian context we ask ourselves many questions: Can't performers also be creative? When? How? How can we distinguish an 'improvisation' from a pre-structured 'composition'? The ability to improvise is an important creative aspect of music-making in India. Theoretically it could be argued that improvisation and composition have to be regarded as opposed to each other, i.e. any composition, when it is freely improvised upon, will not remain a composition any more. Variations that would have crept into such performance may alter and change the original completely. On the other hand, improvisation written down and performed again and again may not have any element of creativity and could not be called improvisation.

In India singing and playing of instruments in the traditional way and presenting *rāgadāri sangita* makes composition and improvisation complementary. Factors which have made this possible are deeply rooted in our music culture. Indian musicians do not use staff notation to write down their music as Westerners do. It is difficult to believe that people who could develop such incredibly complex and rich musical expression did not devise a system of notation like that of the West. The need for writing down music could have mainly arisen for two reasons. Firstly, it must have been to preserve music for posterity. It was felt that music, especially good music, should outlive its performer. If such music was to be played or sung, it must faithfully and authentically, truly and invariably, sound as it did when the creator performed it. The second reason is: where a group had to perform, coordination was necessary. Group performances could have good coordination only when each performer had clear instructions as to what to do and when to do it. In a literate situation the best way to give such instructions was to write them down and given them to each performer. We can see that in both these cases the person whose music was preserved or performed got the position of power – the composer, the creative genius.

Although Indian musicians did not write down their music in an elaborate notation

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

system, they did find ways of preserving the music for posterity*. The best repositories or reservoirs of knowledge they had were young human brains. After all, when ancient civilizations tried to store their knowledge in structures such as pyramids, or on stone tablets of the Inca temples, time and other destructive forces ravaged them beyond redemption. But Indians managed to preserve their Rig Veda for thousands of years in the memory banks of minds. To preserve any knowledge or heritage, it was best to teach the young. On the contrary, preserving it through the written word was perhaps only a second and relatively unsafe option. Folk traditions were preserved over long centuries by musicians in the same way. A folk singer would take a small group of untrained people and ask them to follow what he sang or played. Music would be learnt and remembered by repeating melodic phrases or songs. The teacher in such a situation was actually a composer and improviser. Each successive generation would have one leader among them who would carry the tradition further. He in turn would also contribute his own ideas to the existing repertoire and thus both the preservation aspect and the group-performance aspect would be taken care of, while new creations would be added to the corpus. Needless to say, musical preservation had room for minor changes and individual contribution which Veda preservation did not have. The point being made is that in India the role of a composer is traditionally blended imperceptibly with that of a teacher and a performer.

V.N. Bhātkhande's work, published more than half a century ago, mentions four roles for the musician: *nāyak* or *vāggeyakāra; gāyak* or *vādak; shikshak* or *guru;* and *shāstrakār.* Literally translated, *nāyak* is leader. The word *vāggeyakār* is a compound of two words, *vāk* which means word (spoken), and *geyakār* meaning song-maker. The other roles are, respectively, singer or instrumentalist, teacher, and musicologist. The author also mentions that although it would be very difficult to master and be perfect in even any one of these disciplines it would be futile to attempt to master only one excluding the other three. In the Indian tradition the composer must be able to perform adequately and know enough of musicology while a musicologist cannot claim to be one unless he knows techniques of composition. Neither can a performer be totally ignorant of musicology and techniques of composition because he cannot improvise in a vacuum. In fact, it is the compositions (song structures) embodying different *rāgas* which provide the base for his improvisation. An Indian musician would become the laughing stock of his audience if he consulted a music score in a concert. Also if his music was the same in concert after concert. Does this mean that there are no composers in Indin music? Or does this mean that everyone performing is a composer and there are no performers? Well, neither is right. The right way to go about it would be to look at some concerts through specific words that are used in Indian terminology. Such words do not have exact equivalents in the English language, hence an elaboration of these words to understand the basic concepts may be necessary.

Five important concepts may be dealt with here. In the making of a musician they

*There is wide use, particularly in the South, of an accurate type of notation using the names of notes—*sa re ga ma pa dha ni* — similar to the tonic sol-fa in the West. The complete works of great *vāggeyakāras* like Syāma Sāstri, Thyagarāja and Dikshitar are thus available in print in the South—Ed.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

are seminal. Through these five we come to understand the mutual dependence, interrelation and coexistence of composition, improvisation and performance in the Indian musician's *rāga-tāla* expression. The five are: *shikshā* or *tālim; bandish* or *kriti; abhyās* or *riyāz; badhat* or *vistār* and *prastār; upaj.*

Let us take these up one by one. The first is *shikshā* or *tālim,* learning and teaching music. Both in north India and south India, music is taught traditionally in the *guru-shishya* or *ustad-shāgird* situation. This is an oral-aural method. A student undergoing training is called *shāgird* or *shishya.*

Basics in music begin with voice training, with emphasis on flawless intonation. Some rudimentary rhythmic concepts of *laya* and *tāla* are also taught. After the student acquires control over the voice and the temporal aspect, some composed material is taught. This material may have been composed by the teacher himself or may have been traditionally taught in a 'house' or 'family'. The material for teaching is very important since it shapes the attitude of the musician of the future. It could be in the form of *ālankārik murchhanā,* exercises in embellishment, or simple *bandishes.* Some of these have been regarded as important compositions and have splendidly outgrown their original purpose. The *bandishes* or compositions thus taught can gradually take more and more complex forms. Students have to repeat them without changing anything in the *bandish.* It is for this reason that such *bandishes* are referred to as 'fixed compositions'.

To a casual student a *bandhish* may not appear to be anything more than a bunch of words and melodic phrases. It is much more than that. A *bandish* is at once the essence, the distilled spirit of the *rāga,* and the foundation on which the huge structure of the *rāga* can be erected. It is like an equation that gives immediate and direct access to the beauty of a *rāga.* A *bandish* has to be like a seed which can germinate and grow into a mighty tree. Again, a *bandish* is like a seed that has come from the fruit of a mighty tree that has been cultivated and cared for over a long period by several generations before it yielded fruit. Good *bandishes,* composed generations ago, have a lustre that can only come from continuously being played or sung, honed and polished. In short, *bandishes* are compositions that lead to compositions.

During studentship or apprenticeship, practice sessions are very important. These sessions are called *riyāz* or *abhyās. Riyāz* may be supervised by the *guru* sometimes, but the student must also have his unattended *riyāz* entirely on his own. *Gurus* encourage students to have these sessions for long unbroken periods. A student may do a *chilla* where he undertakes to play or sing all his waking hours for a period of 40 days. What would a student train on when there are no scores, no written material? Does he compose, improvise or repeat? Well, again the answer here is yes to all. He may not be aware that he is composing music. He is expected to repeat certain exercises endlessly and then play or sing whatever he pleases for some time at every session or every day. Also, there is some written material available to him. Though the notated material is very little and though only the *guru* and *shishya* may share a key to decipher what they have written down it works like a trigger. Repeating a rhythmic phrase or melodic cluster several hundred times, the student finds that it suddenly opens a locked door to the

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

treasure of possibilities in the *rāga*. It is then for the *shishya* to bring out the gems and jewels and string and organize them to be admired by his listeners later.

Bringing out the treasure and arranging it for the listener's pleasure could be likened to the *badhat* or *vistār* in our music. The literal translation of the words would be expansion, extension or spreading. But then *badhat* is not merely extending the musical phrases. It is building; it is allowing something to grow. In this sense, perhaps, *vistār* or *badhat* comes closest to the Western concept of composition. The performer here begins with the smallest or simplest of phrases; he then adds, deviates, varies, counters, expands, builds from his starting point. His endeavour must never carry him astray from the *tāla*. His adventure should never break the invisible yet brittle shell of the *rāga-rupa, rāga -bhāva*. He must create and yet repeat. He must glide and float but must appear also firmly rooted within the *rāga*. All the dynamic connotations of his performance are conveyed through the *badhat* aspect. The worth of a performer is gauged only from the way he can do his *badhat*. With the boundaries of *rāga* and *tāla* so clearly indicated, how can a performer ever hope for deviations, expansions, buildings? The analogy of the game of chess may be cited here. A chess player is bound by several rules. Each peice has a specific function, each can move in a certain way and yet the possibilities of moves, when a game starts, are infinite. Also each time it is played, the game develops in a new way. Individual moves may repeat themselves several times through many games but each game is new, every player has a different approach. The context changes every time. Not unlike a chess player, the performer singing or playing a given *rāga* creates new moves, phrases that sound different with changing contexts. But just as a spectator who knows nothing about chess is baffled by a contest between two stalwarts, a person unaware of the musical language of India may feel completely lost in the *badhat* of a *rāga*.

Here is another analogy that would be useful. When an artiste presents a *rāga* to an audience, it is as if he takes them on a guided tour of a city or a resort. The territory of the *rāga,* the way leading to it, its residential areas, its backwaters, its bye-lanes and shanty towns are all known to a good performer. Depending on the time he can devote to the delineation of the *rāga,* he shows his audience around, as it were. He may choose to improvise his route, show people things they had never seen before, or show them areas that even he has not visited for a long time. Occasionally, in very inspired situations, the performer may stumble on a musical phrase or rhythmic twist that takes even him by surprise. To continue the analogy of the guide and the tourists — the guide comes across a tree in blossom or a new church spire: he can tarry there admiring the view and sharing it with others. These musical phrases are no doubt entirely new but they are rooted in the soil of the *rāga*. This is *upaj*.

Upaj can be translated as 'grown out of' or 'born out of'. *Upaj* cannot be taught. *Upaj* has to come into being on its own. It is the child of imagination and inspiration. Musicians in every culture experience these flashes of highly creative moments. Every musician would experience that curious feeling when music seems to flow entirely by itself, propelling itself effortlessly, leaving the musician in utter astonishment, almost as a bystander. It is during such moments that *upaj* in music takes place. Some overcritical

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

enthusiasts mistake this alone as real creative improvisation, this alone as creative music. *Badhat,* according to them, is not creative. But to deny *badhat* the status of improvisation is to deny the intellect its due share in creativity. Imagination and intellect give us graceful *vistār* and *badhat,* while these two and rare flashes of inspiration give us *upaj.*

We may now consider the conventional viewpoint about composition and improvisation. In a more obvious way one might say that Indian composers can compose music in three different ways. Firstly they can compose new *rāgas.* Secondly they can compose new *bandishes* or *gats* in existing *rāgas;* this would be like the *vāggeyakāras* mentioned earlier. Thirdly and lastly, they can create compositions that are neither *rāgas* nor based on *rāgas.* Such compositions may be melodic, rhythmic, or may negate both the concepts.

A composer must have the ability to conceive a composition. He must have a vision which gives him and guides him to the final shape of his composition. However, not every composer can get a clear vision of the final shape. Some composers have a painter-like approach to their work. They may work out a melodic theme or rhythmic phrase and expect that little bit to guide them further to a form. In the West, we do hear of composers who wrote an entire four-movement symphony when the original inspiring germ was a two-note theme. Like a painter who after every few strokes of the brush may step back, look at his own work critically and decide to change or continue to paint in the same way or otherwise, the composer can look at his primary sketches, a few bars at the beginning of the score, and change or continue to write in a particular way. For an Indian composer who wishes to compose a new *rāga,* however, neither of these ways can be useful. He cannot hope to adopt the painterly approach, neither can he have an inspiring vision of the final shape and then slowly slog towards the goal. In the case of the *rāga* the rules of the game are very different.

A few relevant points about this will clarify what is meant. After Venkatamakhi, a great musicologist, had worked out a scheme to classify all *rāgas* in the 17th century, musicians and composers realized that all existing *rāga*-creations would fall under one or other of the *melas.* The 72 *melakartās* enunciated by Venkatamakhi, however, also made it possible to create new *rāgas* within the *melakartā* system. *Rāgahanantah* was the dictum: *rāgas* are infinite. This was true both for the unfathomable emotional depth that *rāgas* could achieve and the number of *rāgas* that the *melakartā* system could generate. Some simple rules and requirements of *rāgas* should be stated here. It must however be remembered that fulfilling the rules and requirements alone does not make a *rāga.* The concept of *rāga* is very profound. Indeed musicians who have studied and practised music for a lifetime have at the end of their careers found the *rāga* concept to be as bewildering and elusive as God Himself. Some requirements of a *rāga* are: The *ādhār shadja* must be present in all *rāgas;* a minimum of five *svaras* are necessary; a predetermined ascending and descending order of *svaras* must be stated; the pivotal and important *svaras* round which the melody would revolve must be decided — these are known as *vādi* and *samvādi svaras;* the *rāga* must have its own mood or *bhāva.* And then several other things must be clarified, such as whether the *poorvānga* or *uttarānga* — the

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

first or second tetrachord – is to predominate. *Rāgas* already in existence can also be blended to form new combinations.

As pointed out already, merely fulfilling the requirements does not elevate any melodic composition to the level of a *rāga*. A melody or skeletal melodic material which can be expanded to form a longer piece is called *dhun*. This is a tune that can be sung or played. Obviously it is easier to compose a *dhun*. Claims to the creation of new *rāgas* must be regarded with great caution. The difficulties of *rāga* composition have not deterred some enthusiastic young composers from rushing in where their senior colleagues fear to tread. Outwardly it would seem that you can take an existing *rāga*, change its pivotal points – the *vādi* and *samvādi* – and come up with a new *rāga*. What such efforts often produce is only a tune. The area of *dhuns* is much more accessible to music directors of films and other media. However, the *rāga* is such a formidable edifice that there can be literally hundreds of ways in which the *dhun* composers can interpret it. *Yaman* and *Bhairavi* have provided a few thousand tunes to the *dhun* and song composers, yet they continue to shine with their full effulgence, like the sun.

Major *rāgas* can be blended in new ways. Such combinations can have as many as six *rāgas* rolled in one. *Khat*, a north Indian *rāga*, is a blend of six *rāgas*, *Patmanjari* a blend of five. The composers who created these blends have remained anonymous.

In the view of scholars several *rāgas* have their origin in the folk tunes of different regions. *Rāgas* are said to have grown out of folk tunes through a cumulative process of sophistication.

On the other hand, individuals have sometimes come up with brilliant *rāga* compositions. It must have been a moment of revelation for the great Tānsen to have suddenly discovered that he was making a new *rāga*. Thyāgarāja and Tānsen, Baijnath and Dikshitar were exceptionally refined, inspired creative minds. They successfully added to the rich treasure of *rāgadāri sangita*. In more recent times too there have been examples of such musical creativity.

The third area of composition possibilities is outside the traditional *rāga-tāla sangita*. Composers here do not need to undergo any training in a traditional way. When people attempt to put musical notes together in a meaningful way for modern media like films or television or live multi-media shows, they are in fact composing music. Although Indian listeners would be unwilling to grant the status of creative music to every one of these attempts, the composers would not relent. So far, attempts in this direction are too few to be taken seriously. Yet there is no doubt that modern technology may in future bring more and more people to this kind of music-making; computerized and synthesized sound emulators, electronic rhythm generators and suchlike are finding an evergrowing market in India.

Culturally, historically, conceptually, traditional Indian music seems to have created a situation where the roles of composer, performer, musician and teacher overlap largely. Each role is linked with and dependent on others. As long as people wish to say something, using the traditional language of music, there will be composers and compositions. The composer in this set-up may not stand out as he does in the West. Only the third area that was mentioned earlier can give rise to the specialized composer

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

as the West knows him. Whether his musical activity will be fruitful, beneficial or harmful, whether such composers and their compositions will survive, will be known in the near future.

With its many-sided magnitude and splendour, *rāga sangita* will, as in the past, continue to inspire musician-composers to create and improvise in the future also. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The Guru-Shishya Relationship in the Learning of Music in India

Narayana Menon

The teacher-pupil relationship is the most significant factor in the teaching and learning of music – in fact training in all disciplines – in India. From the practical lessons given by a teacher to a pupil in playing an instrument to the subtle relationship established between a wise guru and a sensitive disciple, there can be many shades in the nature of the communion and the results achieved. In its highest form, it is a communion of minds whereby the essence of a tradition is passed on to another generation; first, the transference of information to the recipient, then the gradual transformation of that information to knowledge, and finally the knowledge maturing into wisdom. Such communion of minds does take place in many parts of the world, in many systems of music – each giving and taking, the teacher standing at the end of a line, the pupil taking off from that point. Indian music represents one such tradition and has maintained its continuity by this kind of *guru-shishya* relationship.

The recorded history of Indian music is limited to some three to four thousand years and we can speak with confidence only of the practices employed during this short period. There is a popular misconception that this four-thousand-year-old tradition represents an unchanging way of life and thought. This is not true. It really represents four millennia of struggle and growth during which dynasties rose and fell; religious faiths were accepted, absorbed and set aside; various schools of philosophic thought provided intellectual speculation of the highest sophistication; architecture and sculpture, music and the dance flourished in abundant measure. There have been, and there still are, islands of orthodoxy and primitive concepts; and there have been periods of war and pestilence, despair alternating with triumph. But through all these runs a thread of continuity with a recognizable identity.

The study of music which represents the developing consciousness of such a period is not the perpetuation of a vanished period of history, but a renewal of the past in the present when cultural and national identity are shaped and reasserted, and feelings of self-awareness and participation in shared experiences reaffirmed. Music is the community's life and being, its self-expression, understood by the community as an integral part of its way of life. Ananda Coomāraswāmy has described this music as "the chamber music of an aristocratic society".

Our music represents a great aural tradition and experience, not an oral tradition as ethnomusicologists would put it. Music is an aural experience, not a shape on paper. At a time when Europe was groping for some means of putting down music on paper and struggling with rudimentary attempts at harmony, India already had a sizeable library of

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

treatises on various aspects of music – on theory, practice, instruments, aesthetics and, of course, on teaching and learning. When Ānanda Coomāraswāmy says "The art of the present day is a direct descendant of those ancient schools, whose traditions have been handed down with comment and expansion in the guilds of the hereditary musicians" he is stating a fundamental truth but not conveying the whole story because this oral tradition was backed up with our vast literature on theory and practice and aesthetics. Is there a greater work on aesthetics than Bhoja's *Shringāraprakāsha?*

The gurus were aware of the fact that teaching, in its widest sense, implies not merely the transference of facts, techniques, examples set by the teacher, but creating in the mind of the *shishya* the fullest awareness of the subject taught. Music has to be taught not only in its historical perspective and in the perspective of the other arts, but in terms of life itself. The musician's art was never thought of as a social accomplishment. The musician was referred to as *bhāgavatār,* servant of god, a term used to this day in the South. Music was considered a *yantra,* an apparatus of worship. "Those who sing here, sing God" said Shankarāchārya. "All songs are part of Him, who wears a form of sound" says the *Vishnu Purāna.* Early songs embody philosophical concepts, ethical and moral precepts and discussions, social criticism.

I am not introducing a mystique here. There is an element of the ritual in the performance of music, even in its teaching. Some of the concepts that I have referred to are lofty concepts and both gurus and *shishyas* take them seriously and try to live up to them. Traditional forms of instruction are always an integral part of any musical tradition.

A guru is more than a teacher. He is a preceptor. The *shishya* is a disciple, not a pupil. It was common for the guru to instruct his disciple in Sanskrit, in *vyākarana* (grammar, analysis), in history, in *Veda-pārāyana* (the chanting of Vedas). Above all, it is the communion between guru and *shishya,* built up with understanding and mutual respect, through practice and precept, that is the essence of the *gurukula* system. It alone ensures *sampradāya* (the essence of a tradition).

I have described the *guru-shishya* relationship that functions at the highest level. But the system is not without its drawbacks. All gurus are not infallible. The *shishyas* would then inherit their weaknesses, their partialities, their intolerance. The rigid application of textual principles from generation to generation without sufficient realization of the changing patterns of life is another danger.

Tradition itself is not always an unmixed blessing. And we should shed sentimental associations with words like tradition: notions of tradition as invulnerable, as something which has a kind of divine sanction. As T.S. Eliot has said:

> It is dangerous to cling to an old tradition, to confuse the vital with the unessential, the real with the sentimental. Tradition does not mean a return to some previous condition so as to preserve it in perpetuity. It should stimulate our living and our thinking. What may have been a healthy belief or practice yesterday, may well be a pernicious belief today... What we can do is to use our minds, remembering that a tradition without intelligence is not worth having, to discover what is the best life for us... as a particular people in a particular place, what in the past is worth preserving and what should be rejected; and what conditions, within our power to bring about,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

would foster the society we desire.

To that warning of Eliot I would like to add a word in the Indian situation today. We should not confuse between Indian-ness and Hindu-ness. This is not to belittle the role that Hinduism has played in vitalizing our national heritage; nor to belittle the greatness, the sophistication, the profundity of Hindu concepts and their enormous moral force. It is a plea for the acceptance of values inherent in every faith and their unquestionable contribution in forging and shaping our thinking and our creativity. In fact, we need and we should cherish this plurality of approaches which makes the Indian scene a many-splendoured garden in which not a hundred, but a thousand, flowers bloom. Nor should we confuse modernization with Westernization. A renewal of the past in the present context is not revivalism in the narrow sense of the word, but the shaping and reassertion of our values in our search for cultural and national identity so as to make an ancient cultural heritage the community's life and being, its self-expression as understood and accepted by the community today.

The wisest of our gurus are aware of such pitfalls. They avoid blind adherence to the past. They realize that tradition is a matter of wide significance. And they realize, as Eliot has said, that tradition involves a perception not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presentness. The historical sense is a sense of the timeless and of the temporal. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Gharānās in Hindustāni Vocal Music

Vijay Kichlu

The term gharānā is indicative of the continuity of kinship through family heredity on the one hand, and the continuity of musical traditions carried forward through transference of musical knowledge, learning and stylistic features from guru (ustad) to *shishya* (*shāgird*), over generations, on the other. Although the term *gharānā* in the parlance of Hindustāni music is of recent origin—it is hardly two centuries old—the underlying idea has been a well accepted principle from ancient times as an integral part not only of musical but indeed of all cultural traditions of India. The essence of this idea was denoted by terms like *parampara* and *sampradāya.*

From the ancient *prabandha,* meaning a well-knit composition, emerged *dhrupada* during the 13th century. *Dhrupada* was a felicitous combination of the elements of *prabandha* and those of the popular regional song patterns. Held in high respect and widely popular, *dhrupada* remained the dominant form till *khayāl* came into prominence.

Dhrupada had four different *vānis* or styles: *Gaurhār vāni,* which conveyed a mood of serenity through long *meends* or glides; *Dāgar vāni,* which had simpler and softer movements, the predominant character being devotional; *Khandār vāni,* which was charged with powerful *gamak,* i.e. a deep sound emanating from the navel, moving with a push from note to note; and *Nauhār vāni,* of which the most distinctive feature was the *chhoot,* i.e. a jump from one note to the other with several notes in between.

With the emergence of the *khayāl* style of singing in the 19th century, the rigidity of *dhrupada* was abandoned in favour of the creativity of a musician which was allowed much freer vein. Ornamentation in music assumed a significant role. Fuller expression of the individual's creative genius was possible in response to which great masters created specific styles of singing in *khayāl.* These gave birth to different *gharānās* as we know them today. Vāmanrāo Deshpānde in his book *Indian Musical Traditions* rightly points out:

> There are in painting or in sculpture 'schools' or groups of artists inspired by a common tradition or influenced by a common style. *Gharānās,* however, are not schools. The word *gharānā* is derived from the word *ghar,* meaning home. *Gharānās* may therefore be understood as 'musical houses', very sectarian in their attitude and marked by a very strong family pride. *Gharānā* as such immediately conveys a tradition, a culture associated with a musical house, a certain musical aristocracy and restraint exercised by the members of that household. Each *gharānā* has its own salient features, its own style of presentation, a distinct tonal quality, compositions unique to that *gharānā,* its own structural patterns of *tānas* and its own interpretation of some *rāgas.*

Vāmanrāo Deshpānde quotes Howard Boatwright, American scholar and musician,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

as having said: "An Indian musician keeps his *gharānā* or tradition above himself." This is understandable. Throughout the Vedic period learning was through oral instruction but methods of memorizing were highly systematic. At a very young age the student was sent to live with his master for a number of years. The master or the *guru* took the place of the father. The Hindu scriptures mention: "Guru is Brahmā, guru is Vishnu, guru is Maheshvara (the three images of trinity); *guru* is clearly the entire universe, I bow down in salutation to him."

Knowledge could not be destroyed in India in spite of many conquests of the subcontinent because it was oral. Sanskrit literature, philosophy, legal codes, religious rituals were all transmitted by word of mouth and learnt by heart. Classical music was taught in the teacher-disciple tradition (*guru-shishya-paramparā*); the teacher taught orally by rote, ensuring adequate individual attention to each pupil. There had to be a prolonged and intense personal relationship between the master and his disciple. The disciple had to acquire not only the art but the total personality of his master.

When the Mughal empire fell, musicians found refuge in various smaller states which gave them shelter, security and honour. The performing art of music was confined to the courts and to the elite. As communications were not easy, musicians travelled little. Occasionally those musicians whose name and fame had travelled wide were invited by other and sometimes bigger states to perform in their courts and prove their learning and superiority before the court musicians of the host ruler. There were no music festivals for the masses, as we find today. So different *gharānās* flourished at different places and each musical tradition was preserved and passed on from generation to generation. The *gharānā* was considered sacred and was clung to with religious fervour.

Until the early decades of this century, classical music in India was taught only in the master-pupil tradition (*guru-shishya-paramparā*). The pupil, once selected, lived with the master at the latter's expense and learnt music at his feet and command. In return the pupil gave lifelong service and loyalty to his master. In order to become an accomplished musician one had to devote oneself to decades of learning and practice. Not every aspirant outside a *gharānā* could learn music as there were hardly any music schools, no professional tutors, no standardized text-books. Only those who had rich voices and exceptional talent could hope to win the favour of an ustad and learn music through total devotion to him. By and large, learning was transferred to blood relations only. But there were notable exceptions as well.

To gain acceptance, a *gharānā* must have a continuity of three or four generations. Not even an exceptionally brilliant musician's newly created style will be identified as a *gharānā* style unless it survives him by at least three generations, transmitted by able successors.

Most of the *gharānās* are known after the towns or cities where they were localized, such as Gwalior, Agra, Jaipur, Rampur, Patiala, Sahaswan, Kirana, etc. Sometimes a *gharānā* is also named after an outstanding musician, like the Seniā (Tānsen), Dāgar (Dāgar family) and Allādiya (Alladiya Khan) *gharānās.*

Let us examine some of the established and well known *gharānās.*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Tānsen was among India's most illustrious musicians of all times. He was one of the 'nine gems' of the emperor Akbar's court. His son, Bilās Khan, a vocalist of great repute, and his son-in-law, Sammukhan Singh, a Been player, were among his prominent disciples and began to be known as Seniās. The Seniā tradition of *dhrupada* continued till the early decades of this century, Ustad Muhammad Ali Khan being the last representative. However, the lore of Hindustāni music eminently enriched by Tānsen in the shape of new *rāgas* and hundreds of *dhrupada* compositions did not remain confined to the Seniā *gharānā*. It became the legacy of the entire realm of Hindustāni music and became part of the repertoire of musicians belonging to different *gharānās* and traditions – both vocal and instrumental.

The pioneers of the Gwalior *gharānā* were Nathan Pirbaksh, Haddu Khan, Hassu Khan and Rehmat Khan. This *gharānā* is known for its full-throated, clear voice production, using a lot of *behlāvā*, well-knit compositions in medium tempo using mostly *tālas* like *jhumrā, Ada Chautāla, Tilwādā, Ektāla,* and intricate *tānas* in varied speed leading up to the *sapāt*. Musicians of this *gharānā* also handle *tarānā* and *tappā* forms very competently. The Gwalior *gharānā* of *khayāl* is considered to be the source of most of the *gayakis* and *gharānās* that came to the fore in later years. Among the famous representatives of this *gharānā* in the early 20th century were Bālkrishnabuā Ichalkaranjikar, Shankar Rāo Pandit, Ramkrishnabuā Vaze and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. Mention must also be made of Krishnarāo Shankar Pandit, Rajabhaiyya Poonchwale, Omkārnāth Thākur, Vināyakrāo Patwardhan, Nārāyanrāo Vyās and D.V. Paluskar.

The history of the Agra *gharānā* goes back to the 15th century when its followers were *dhrupada* singers of the *Nauhār vāni*. Sujān Das or Haji Sujān Khan of this *gharāna* was a contemporary of Tānsen and also a court musician of emperor Akbar. Musicians of the *gharānā* took up *khayāl* singing from the time of Gagge Khuda Bux. Among luminaries of the Agrā *gharānā* the names of Nathan Khan, Faiyyāz Khan, Bhāskarbuā Bākhle, Jagannāthbuā Purohit and Vilāyat Hussain Khan must be mentioned. Among the reputed disciples of the *gharānā*, Pandits Shrikrishna Narayan Ratanjankar and Dilip Chandra Vedi are prominent. The present well-known musicians of the Agra *gharānā* are Khādim Hussain Khan, and Yunus Hussain Khan; Sharāfat Hussain Khan and Latāfat Hussain Khan, notable representatives of the *gharānā,* died recently. The *gāyaki* of the Agrā *gharānā* as we know it today is largely the result of the genius of Ustad Faiyyāz Khan – one of the most important Hindustāni vocalists of the 20th century. The salient characteristics of the *gāyaki* are the *nom-tom ālāpchāri* borrowed from *dhrupada, bol tānas* and *bāt* with delicate rhythmic interaction, and a unique manner of presenting compositions, particularly of medium tempo.

The pioneers of the Rampur-Sahaswān *gharānā* were Ināyat Hussain Khan and Fidā Hussain Khan. Mushtāq Hussain Khan, a disciple of Ināyat Hussain Khan, and the well-known Bahādur Hussain Khan of Seniā *gharānā* were court musicians at the Rampur *darbār* for a long time. Mushtāq Hussain Khan was among the leading musicians of his period. Nissār Hussain Khan, son of Fida Hussain Khan, is one of the best known musicians of this generation. He has created a unique and effective style of

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

tarāṇā singing. His son-in-law Hafeez Ahmed Khan is a well-known vocalist too.

The first well-known singers of the Patiala *gharānā* were Ali Bux and Fateh Ali, commonly known as Alliā-Fattu, who either directly learnt from or whose *gāyaki* was greatly influenced by Behram Khan, the famous *dhrupada* singer, and Mubārak Ali Khan— both of Jaipur— as also Tān Ras Khan of Delhi. Later Āshiq Ali Khan, Umed Ali Khan and Kāle Khan became well-known Patiala singers. Kāle Khan's disciple Bade Ghulam Ali Khan introduced the *behlāvā anga* in the *gharānā gāyaki* with great success. Patiālā's is essentially a *tāna-pradhāna gāyaki* but Bade Ghulam Ali Khan enriched it significantly with the introduction of *behlāvā*, and a very delicate blend of *meend* and *gamak*. In spite of the enormous following of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, his son and disciple Munawwar Ali Khan remains the only able exponent of his *gāyakī*.

The Kirāna gharāna owes its origin to Abdul Karim Khan, who was originally a disciple of the Gwalior school; the *gharānā* is named after his birth-place Kirānā, a village in present-day Haryana. Later, Abdul Wahid Khan made a substantial contribution in shaping the Kirana *gāyaki* as it is known today. Sawāi Gandharva, Gangubāi Hāngal, Hirābāi Barodekar and Roshanārā Begum were the most illustrious exponents of this *gharānā* in the last generation. The present scene is dominated by Bhimsen Joshi. The salient characteristics of Kirānā *gāyaki* are its *ati-vilambita laya* (slow tempo) at the start of a recital, very detailed and expansive *vistāra* (elaboration), preference for the higher keys, an unsual stress on mathematical permutation of notes based on *merukhanda*, and a stress on emotional content. Of all prevailing styles of singing, Kirānā is practised the most, perhaps because of its melodic appeal and the ease with which it can be picked up.

Amir Khan stands out as a distinctive genius who created a new *gāyaki* with a contemplative ethos, characterized by a peculiar throw of the voice and adorned with *chhoot tānas* and profuse *sargam*. He acquired a large following and along with Bade Ghulam Ali Khan wielded great influence in the field of Hindustāni music.

Originally from Atrauli, the *dhrupada* singer Allādiyā Khan evolved a new *khayāl gāyaki* and founded the Atrauli-Jaipur gharana which is sometimes referred to as the Allādiyā *gharānā*. Allādiyā Khan's distinguished disciples include his two sons Manji Khan and Bhurji Khan, Kesarbāi Kerkar and Nivruttibua Sarnaik. The salient characteristics of this *gāyaki* are clear voice production with pure *ākara*, a somewhat brief *vistāra* with rhythmic *behlāvā*, intricate *tāna* patterns, and a large number of uncommon and *mishra rāgas*. Moghubai Kurdikar is another distinguished singer of this *gharānā* and her daughter Kishori Amonkar is among the most popular musicians of the present generation.

The growth of Hindustāni music and the *gharānā* system was at its peak at the end of the 19th century when it was nurtured in cloistered chambers in the courts of princes. Musicians sang to small and select audience where many a listener was either a musician himself or a serious student or devotee of music. There were only chamber concerts where no announcements were made and the listener had to find out for himself which *gharānā* the musician belonged to and what *rāga* he was singing. There was a sudden whisper as soon as the *rāga* exposed itself. Today listeners want a full history of the

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

musician including descriptions of the *rāga*, the *tāla* and the compositions sung.

The process of socio-economic change which started in early 20th century has altered the entire scene and attitude towards music. With the Independence of India and the merger of the princely states, in the words of K.P. Mukherjee, "Our Hindustāni Classical Music has also become independent or has at least shown signs of liberation from the *shāstras*."

The emergence of a powerful middle class and with it the growth of cities and townships became a factor in the development of Hindustāni classical music. Progress in trade and commerce gave rise to an additional class of 'merchant princes'. Rural landlords (the zamindārs) also started having their second establishments in cities. All these classes felt the desire to promote and patronize Indian culture, particularly Indian music.

After the merger of the princely states, a number of learned musicians lost royal patronage. Fortunately, in the meantime, public music performances had begun. By the 50s and 60s music festivals and conferences were attracting large crowds throughout the country. With vastly improved transportation, musicians were soon moving from place to place in response to engagements. A large number of sponsoring organisations also emerged. A new audience appeared, and the pattern and repertoire of classical music concerts underwent an inevitable change. *Dhrupada-dhamāra*, on which even the *khayāl* singers of the 19th century built their foundation, is rarely heard today and is confined to a few musicians.

We face certain vital questions today. Is the *gharānā* system collapsing? Are *gharānās* necessary to the concept and development of Indian classical music? What is the future of the *gharānā*?

Many, including some contemporary performing musicians – particularly those who have not been trained in the *gharānā* tradition – are of the opinion that the *gharānā* system is out of date. It does not represent the spirit of the age, it curbs one's creativity and freedom of expression. Therefore it is not desirable.

In defence of this view, it can be said that music is primarily a performing art and represents the magnificent creative spirit of man, which is beyond limitation or grammatical formulation. Every musician has his own realization, an element of personality which demands the fullest expression.

But this, in my opinion, is a very narrow assessment of the concept of the *gharānā*. It should not be forgotten that even when we are able to formulate the general structure of a *gharānā* theoretically, there always remains an additional something, an artistic surplus, an element of personality, that constitutes the soul of a *gharānā*. No two outstanding musicians of a *gharānā* have produced exactly the same music. Take for example the Agra gharānā. Faiyyāz Khan created a style of his own which was unique. Vilāyat Hussain Khan, Khādim Hussain Khan, Latāfat Hussain Khan and Sharāfat Hussain Khan all belonged to the Agra *gharānā* but produced entirely different results on the same foundation. Take the case of the Gwalior *gharānā*. Krishnarāo Shankar Pandit, Omkarnath Thakur, Vināyak Rao Patwardhan and D.V. Paluskar – all of the same *gharānā* – brought their separate personalities to bear on their singing. Examining

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

the Kirānā *gharānā* would anyone say that Hirābāi Barodekar and Bhimsen Joshi belong to the same tradition? Did the element of personality not work its wonder in the case of Amir Khan whose genius started a new tradition, a new style for posterity to follow? So the process goes on all the time. It only needs a genius to appear on the scene.

Pradeep Kumar Sen Gupta has aptly summarized the situation:

> We shall go too far if we altogether reject the verdict of a music tradition and accept music as happy -go- lucky device of human values. Indian music is sacred and spiritual. It has an element of divinity within itself where finite human beings realize their identity and oneness with the infinite Lord. So Indian music has never been a servant of mere personal choice and whims. The *gharānā* must be there so that a proper cultivation of music can be achieved in accordance with the present needs of society and culture. The *gharānā* is open where the flow proceeds onwards, guarding it only where there is danger of deviation and distortions.

The value of *gharānā* training lies in a sound and systematic teaching system which ensures a firm foundation and a settled mind in a pupil so essential to strike the right balance between prolific expression and restraint. The lessons of a master should be faithfully followed by the future generation through the path not of imitation but adaptation.

Indian music is going through a period of transition. Stalwarts like Faiyyāz Khan, Allādiyā Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Amir Khan, Mushtāq Hussain Khan, Omkār-nath Thakur, Kesarbai Kerkar, are no longer on the scene. Our traditional training system based on *guru-shishya-paramparā*, which has no substitute, is on trial. Due to our musicians constantly travelling all over the country giving performances, students have lost the constant companionship and guidance of their masters, so essential for their development. The non-availability of eminent performing musician-*gurus* for imparting continued training and guidance to pupils in their charge is posing a serious problem.

Music has now been introduced in colleges and universities as an academic subject and part of an overall liberal education. Like other disciplines, music is taught here through a fixed syllabus to classes comprising large number of students with varying degrees of musical aptitude. While graduates, post-graduates and even doctors of music come out of universities, emergence of performing musicians of high calibre and eminence is difficult to expect from the class-room teaching imparted in institutions.

Music education is posing serious problems. On the one hand, the general education of children has become a prime need in our times; on the other, once committed to the long hours and strains of schooling, children do not have the energy and zest to learn music seriously, Thus, as far as music is concerned, they miss the precious years between ten and twenty when all the hard work is put in and a sound foundation laid.

For sustenance of excellence in music we shall have to fall back upon the traditional methods of teaching followed by *gharānās* where the learned master treated the grooming of a pupil as his moral responsibility and where the pupil put in years of hard work under strict discipline, avoiding all short-cuts. Institutions have a vital role to play in this situation as the problem is too enormous to be tackled by individual patrons.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Some institutions, instead of concentrating on mass production, should organize only qualitative training. In recent years, The National Centre for the Performing Arts, Bombay, has been holding master classes by musicians of the calibre of Annapurna Devi and Ram Narayan, not to mention masters like the late Rahimuddin Khan Dagar and Ahmed Jān Thirakwa; these have met with limited success. The first attempt to restore traditional *gharānā* training has been made by Sangeet Research Academy, Calcutta. Some learned musicians of different *gharānās* including Nissār Hussain Khan, Nivruttibuā Sarnaik, Girijā Devi, Latāfat Hussain Khan and A. Kānan have been invited to the Academy as resident teachers and have trained talented students from all over the country. But this alone is not enough. For lasting results there will have to be several such institutions where intensive training in music is combined with general education, so essential for developing a total personality.

Hindustāni classical music has been orally preserved over centuries. In its transmission the *gharānās* have rendered invaluable service. Their contribution to the sustenance and cumulative growth of our classical music tradition can never be overestimated. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

An Enquiry into the Rāga-Time Association*

Mukund Lath

Every Indian, at least every north Indian, whether he is a lover of classical music or not, believes that the hoary forms he is heir to, namely the *rāgas*, have important esoteric aspects besides the musical. I would like to discuss one such aspect, viewing it in the perspective of history. I refer to what may be called the time aspect of a *rāga*. Each *rāga*, it is commonly held, in order to be truly efficacious has to be sung or played only at a particular hour of the day or night. A more informed listener will even assert that belonging to a specific part of the day or night is as essential a property of a *rāga* as its tonal structure. He might then proceed to enumerate morning *rāgas*, noon *rāgas*, evening *rāgas*, dusk *rāgas*, late-at-night *rāgas* and just-before-morning *rāgas*.

All of us, I am sure, have come across persons, obviously not very musical, not quite capable of distinguishing one *rāga* from another, who yet are deeply convinced that a *rāga* sung outside of its assigned hour creates a grating effect. Clearly, the notion that a *rāga* has inherent affinity with a certain part of the day is very deeply ingrained in our culture.

If you ask, 'How does one know which *rāga* belongs to what hour?' the answer will be unanimous: the scheme has been fixed by a tradition reaching back to time immemorial. And, it would be added, it is not a meaningless conventional scheme but a living tradition which finds renewed sanction in the musical experience of every fresh generation.

But, if the matter is one of direct musical experience, then the tonal or other more palpable features that are felt to be associated with the 'morning' or 'evening' quality of a *rāga* can surely be identified and distinguished. This seems an obvious question to ask and one would expect to find an answer to it in the older musical texts, but, curiously enough, the first person to have asked it was Pandit Bhātkhande, whose works belong to the early years of our own century. He was also the first person who attempted to provide empirical tonal cognates for the 'morning', 'noon', 'evening' and similar time-related properties of *rāgas*. The generalizations which he arrived at found common acceptance and still remain without any serious rival. His might almost be termed the 'official' theory in the matter, despite doubts and reservations felt in many circles — reservations which, however, do not go beyond matters of detail.

Whatever the merits of Bhātkhande's analysis, the very fact that he considered it an important enterprise in understanding and delineating Hindustāni music is of great significance. He strongly felt that the notion of assigning a specific hour to every *rāga*

*Reproduced, with kind permission, from *Jijnasa*, Journal of the History of Ideas and Culture, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

was an essential element of Hindustāni music: a major distinguishing mark. And this feeling, plainly, was the guiding motive behind his search for those patterns in *rāgas* which marked them as 'morning' or 'evening' and the like. In a, now historic, speech made at the first All-India Music Conference in Baroda in 1916, he enumerated twenty significant features which in his view distinguished the Hindustāni system, making it, in his words, "a system perfectly independent of the Southern or Carnātic".[1] He set these features out in twenty separate and numbered clauses of which as many as six, numbers 5–10, are concerned with the time aspect of *rāgas.*

In clause number five he remarks: "Stated times of the night and day are assigned to particular *rāgas*, according to a design which might suggest a psycho-physiological basis".

The next five clauses set out certain specific features which "enable a singer or listener to determine approximately the time of the raga". He draws our attention to the crucial importance in this matter of the *tivra ma*, the combinations *komala re-dha, ga-ni* and so forth – features which now form part of general musical knowledge and theory.

Pandit Bhātkhande spoke of the notion of *rāgas* and their assigned hours with a specific purpose in mind: namely, to distinguish the Hindustāni system from the Carnātic system of music. Thus, in his days, it was only the north Indian singers and listeners who felt that particular *rāgas* belonged to particular hours of the night or day. South Indian singers, in contrast, did not share a similar feeling about their *rāgas.* Yet, though the Southerner's music might be recognizably different from that of the Northerner, there is an equally recognizable affinity and kinship between the two approaches, especially in their delineation of *rāgas. Rāga*-patterns, both in the South and the North, are based on formal principles that stem from an identical source and follow parallel streams of inspiration and development, interacting with each other to a no mean degree. Many *rāgas* of north India have such close counterparts in the South that even non-specialist listeners can recognize them as almost identical forms. This obvious feeling of consanguinity is, indeed, the inspiration behind a popular *Vividha Bhārati* programme of All India Radio, where north Indian *rāgas* are presented along with their south Indian siblings to reveal close kinship. But, if many *rāga* patterns in the South and North are so conspicuously similar, then they are bound to have formal features which are also essentially alike: features such as the dominant or exclusive presence of the *tivra ma*, or the combination *komala re-dha, ga-ni* and the like, for these are tonal features as characteristic of Carnātic *rāgas* as of their Hindustāni analogues. Yet Carnātic music knows of no 'morning', 'evening' or 'noon' *rāgas.*

The fact that there is, in north India, a definite design or scheme within which different *rāgas* have been assigned to different hours of the day suggests, according to Pandit Bhātkhande, a psychological or physiological basis. He never, so far as I know, spelt out what he wished to indicate by speaking of such a basis. But, if this basis is in any sense psychological or physiological then it must certainly be also a universal phenomenon common to both north Indians and south Indians and, in fact, to all mankind. Any sensitive listener, in other words, should be able to feel the 'morning' or 'evening' quality of a *rāga.* But no one except a person duly initiated into the esoteric

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

lore and conventions of Hindustāni music really responds to this quality in *rāgas.*

It is thus evidently a response which has to be learned. It is the product of a specific culture. If it seems natural and spontaneous to the Hindustāni musician and listener, it is because it has been so deeply ingrained through centuries of persuasive suggestion and habitual observance as to have become almost a reflex. That it is a trained and not a natural response is often evident in the untutored reaction of listeners from alien musical cultures, who, though moved by a *rāga*, fail to detect its affinity with a particular time of the day or night. The perception of this affinity has to be taught to them and, of course, many of them prove very dutiful students. But, being a learned response, it can also be unlearned. In truth, as purely musical experience gains roots and one begins to know and love a *rāga* for itself one is quite able to detach it from such external associations as its relation with a particular hour of the day. This is especially true of practising musicians, who, of all people, are closest to the *rāgas.* Fox Strangways, writing almost contemporaneously with Bhātkhande — *The Music of Hindustan* by him was published in 1914 — speaks of 'advanced' musicians who found no meaning in ascribing hours or seasons to *rāgas*[2]. *Rāgas,* traditionally, belong not only to certain times of the day but also to particular seasons. The traditions behind the two ascriptions, seasonal and hourly, are equally old. The seasonal ascription, indeed, as we shall see, is perhaps the more ancient one. The seasonal aspect of *rāgas* is no longer taken seriously even in the North except in the case of the various *Malhāras, Basanta* and *Bahār,* and these, too, are no longer kept tied down to their ascribed seasons. Yet, we still believe in confining them to boundaries of the hours within which they have been restricted by convention. There is plainly an inconsistency here: if a *rāga* is just as sweet out of its assigned season, why should it not be equally sweet out of its ascribed hour? The psycho-physiological basis, if any, is certainly the same in both cases. *Bhairavi* was allowed to break its bounds, restricting it to the early morning, without adversely affecting its ethos. Who knows, other *rāgas* may follow suit.

Musicians, in any case, cannot strictly observe the time rule, at least on All India Radio, where 'morning', 'noon' and 'evening' *rāgas* are often sung in a single sitting. There are even signs of unrest concerning this limitation among concertgoers. People have begun to miss morning *rāgas* in concerts, for most concerts are evening affairs. The south Indians, too, once connected the *rāgas* to specific hours, as we know from the testimony of Ramāmātya, who wrote his *Svaramelakalānidhi* in the 16th century and is one of the oldest and most honoured authorities in the South[3]. They have given up the notion without any sense of loss.

It would be instructive to examine the history of the *rāga*-time tradition in the North, the weight of whose authority guides us in associating different *rāgas* with different hours of the day.

Most of us have quite a dim and shadowy notion of the antiquity and history of this tradition. If pressed, we might say it is as old as the *rāgas* themselves which are very, very old. Bhātkhande, who was otherwise a historically alert scholar, calls it a centuries-old notion, without being interested in tracing its history in detail. He was of the opinion that though there have been changes in the time of the day assigned to different *rāgas*, yet

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

the concept that a particular *rāga* belongs to particular hours has remained unchanged over the centuries. It was, therefore, to be honoured[4].

Surprisingly, this does not seem to have led him to ask certain disturbing questions which such a realization ought naturally to pose: Did the different *rāgas,* assigned to the same hours of the day at different points in history, share certain tonal patterns in common ? This seems unlikely, and I believe Bhātkhande would have agreed. Even if he were not to, another question arises: Were the tonal patterns which affiliated these *rāgas* to certain hours of the day the same as those discovered by Bhātkhande ? Again a difficult question to answer but again the answer probably would be, 'Presumably not'. What then are we to make of Bhātkhande's tonal affinities and their supposedly psycho-physical basis ? This basis has certainly not changed over the last few hundred years, but tonal patterns corresponding to a particular time of the day appear to have done so. How is one to explain this change ?

Looking up the old texts we find that the *rāga*-time theory is certainly not as old as the *rāgas* themselves. The oldest *rāgas* that we know of are older than Bharata (2nd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D.) who has left behind instructions concerning the use of the *grāma-rāgas* in dramas. He makes no connection between them and the hours of the day. The first major available text written mainly about *rāgas* is the *Brihaddeshi* of Mātanga, belonging to the Gupta period or later and usually placed in the 7th or 8th century A.D. The *rāgas,* in Mātanga's days, comprised a rich body of forms including *bhāshā, vibhāshā, antara-bhāshā,* besides *grāma-rāgas* and *rāgas* proper. This was already an old, well-entrenched corpus of music. Mātanga speaks of various *gitis* or styles of *rāga* singing and of regional *rāgas—rāgas* born in or popular in specific regions[5]—but of a time theory, as we know it today, there is no trace.

Abhinavagupta, writing towards the end of the 10th and beginning of the 11th century, quotes an earlier authority called Kashyapa, an ancient theorist (date unknown) who speaks of the seasonal aspect of *rāgas:* "[Rāga] *Prenkholita* should be sung in spring, so should *Mālavapanchama. Takkarāga, Gaudakukubha, Bhinnashadaja, Kaishika* and *Bhinnapanchama* are favoured in summer and the subsequent seasons"[6]

Later *sangita* texts bracket Kashyapa along with Mātanga, Yashtika and others as hoary teachers. Kashyapa, perhaps, may be placed in the same period as Mātanga, that is the 7th or the 8th century A.D. or perhaps still earlier.

Nanyabhupāla, a king of Mithilā, writing a century after Abhinavagupta, is the first person, I find, who speaks of a connection between musical forms and an assigned hour of rendering them. In the chapter on *rāgas* (Chapter 7) in his *Bhāratabhashya,* he connects different *gitis* to different hours *(yamas)* of the day. The two *gitis, shuddha* and *bhinna,* are assigned to the first *yama* or *prahara* (a three-hour period) of the day. The *giti gaudi* is placed at midday: *Vesara* is in the first part of the day and *Śādhārana* is said to be *sādhārana* or 'common' to all hours of the day.

These *gitis,* as we have said earlier, were not *rāgas* or similar forms, but various styles of rendering *rāgas,* akin to the *vanis* of *dhrupada* and the different *gāyakis* of present-day music. Immediately after speaking of *gitis* and their appropriate hours of singing, Nanya proclaims: "The *bhāshās* of different *rāgas* fall within the same time

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

bracket *(kāla)* as the *rāgas* to which they are attached".

He does not give details regarding the time of the day in which specific *rāgas* were to be rendered. He speaks only of the *gitis* and their time. However, different groups of *rāgas* were assigned to different *gitis*. The time of a *rāga* was presumably to be known through its *giti*. What is more remarkable in this context is that Nanya assigns *gitis* or *rāgas* to specific hours not because of aesthetic but religious reasons. Unlike the listeners of today, he does not seem to have felt an affinity of 'mood' or 'ethos' between a specific hour and a specific *rāga*: he said that it was more 'auspicious' to sing a particular *rāga* — or a *rāga*-like form such as the *bhāshā* — at a particular hour. With this, too, he adds a rider: "All these [*bhāshās*] are equally meritorious and result in eternal merit whenever they are sung; the rule concerning special hours of singing them is meant only for added religious merit" (*shreyovisheshaya*).[7]

For two or three centuries after Nanyadeva we have texts which, for our purposes, may be divided into two categories: those that speak of a connection between *rāgas* and their hour of singing and those that do not. Someshvara III, another king and a contemporary of Nanyadeva, who ruled in the Deccan in the beginning of the 12th century, has a big section on music in his *Mānasollāsa*. He speaks of no connection between *rāgas* and hours of the day, perhaps because he was chiefly interested in music as *vinoda* — a source of aesthetic pleasure: he is silent concerning the extra-musical 'auspicious' qualities of *rāgas*.[8] This is not to imply that Someshvara was an irreligious man. Indeed, his section on song contains many hymns and ends with the exhortation that the *prabandhas* (musical compositions), which he has spoken of, should be sung before the gods with due devotion[9]. But he evidently saw no merit, religious or other, in associating *rāgas* with particular hours. His son Jagadekamalla, too, wrote on music. Jagadekamalla's *Sangita Chudāmani* is also silent concerning *rāgas* and their specific hour of singing; though it does, at least on one occasion, speak of a seasonal connection, calling *Deshihindola* a spring raga.[10]

The two important texts after Nanya and Someshvara are the *Sangitasamayasāra* of Parshvadeva (date not certain) and the *Sangita Ratnākāra* of Sarangadeva (early 13th century). Parshvadeva does not speak of any connection between *rāgas* and a prescribed time of singing, though he speaks of *rāgas* in detail. Sarangadeva, however, diligently notes the hour of the day against every *rāga* that he describes, using phrases like *geyo'hnah prathame yame* (to be sung during the first *yama* or *prahara* of the day), *madhyame'hno geyo* (to be sung during midday) and the like[11]. Sarangadeva connects *rāgas* to seasons also.

Sarangadeva had avowedly based his description of *rāgas* on earlier authorities, which he copiously names. We do not know, however, his source for the ascription of hours to *rāgas*. Earlier works available to us, as we have seen, do not make such ascriptions. Nanyadeva makes a connection between *gitis* and hours of the day, but very half-heartedly. The time factor in his view did no more than add a little more auspiciousness (*shreyovishesha*) to the rendering of a *rāga*. Perhaps the ascriptions noted by Sarangadeva were also made in the same spirit. Sarangadeva speaks of no aesthetic affinity, a kinship of ethos, between *rāgas* and hours of the day. And it would not be

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

unreasonable to conjecture that he too, like Nanyadeva, thought that to sing a *rāga* at a particular time made it more auspicious. He may have been guided in this by Nanya whose work he perhaps knew, since he was an erudite scholar in *sangita* texts. In any case, neither he nor the preceding tradition provides any basis for supposing that an intimate connection of 'ethos' or 'character' was felt by musicians or listeners between a *rāga* and its hour. That was to come later.

A rule believed to lead to greater auspiciousness, hence religious merit, tends to become a ritual and turns easily into established convention or customary practice. It thus becomes an ingrained habit, to be followed even after religious connections are forgotten. This is what seems to have happened in the case of the *rāgas* and their connection with specific hours of the day.

Sarangadeva was greatly revered by later authors and his work was accorded an almost canonic authority. The connection he made between individual *rāgas* and specific hours of the day became a convention with later authors, even though the *rāgas* themselves and the specific hours to which they were connected did not remain the same.

In the beginning, the *rāga*-time rule seems to have been loosely observed and allowed flexibility. Pandit Bhātkhande quotes an old dictum to the effect that after ten *dandas* of the night have passed, any *rāga* can be sung[12]. Another dictum quoted in the *Sangita Darpana* is that if a king so orders, any *rāga* can be sung at any time[13].

Gradually, as the habit of singing particular *rāgas* at particular hours sunk in, it began to be thought that *rāgas* please only at their allotted hours — *"Yathākāle samarabdham gitam bhavati ranjakam"*, as Dāmodara puts it. An aesthetic connection was thus made between a *rāga* and the time to which it had been allotted. Listeners and musicians began to feel that a *rāga* was deeply associated with an hour and so began to perceive an affinity of 'ethos' between the two. The category of the aesthetic was confused with that of the auspicious.

But it was only in modern times, with Bhātkhande, that an attempt was made to discover certain structural denominators common to *rāgas* placed in the same time-bracket. Bhātkhande succeded in making a few generalizations which found great acceptance. Modern Hindustāni musical theory as well as practice have been greatly influenced by his views and teachings in other ways too.

Yet people have found fault with his generalizations and pointed out notable exceptions. And in any case, as I said earlier, no one has ever tried to display and work out in proper empirical detail the psycho-physiological basis which he believed was the ground for the *rāga*-time connection. It is one thing to find common features in *rāgas* that have been placed in a single time-bracket but quite another to show that this points at a deeper psycho-physiological basis for the occurrence. As is clear from my argument, I think that the association made between a *rāga* and its allotted time is an arbitrary one: it is not embedded in any universal human response, but is culturally conditioned as I have tried to show through the brief survey of its history. This notion remains localized in the North — and has been given up without any adverse consequences in the sister system of the South. Even a culturally conditioned response may be valuable, but, as I

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

have pointed out earlier, a deeper musical response tends to undermine rather than support the *rāga*-time association. □

References

[1]The speech has been reproduced as *A Short Historical Survey of the Music of Upper India, Bombay, 1934.*, See pages 41-42.

[2]A.H. Fox Strangways, *The Music of Hindustan,* p. 153. Interestingly, Fox Strangways had his own peculiar theory, regarding structural properties that mark a *rāga* as 'morning' or 'evening'. He believed that morning *rāgas* had *amshas* ranging about G and the evening about E. *Ibid.*

[3]*Svaramelakalānidhi.* See *Rāga Prakarna.*

[4]See *Bhātkhande Smriti Grantha,* Khairagarh, 1966, p. 439.

[5]*Brihaddeshi,* p. 127 (Trivandrum edition).

[6]Verses 74-75 of *Natyashāstra* with the *Abhinava Bhārati*, G.O.S. edition, Vol. IV, p. 78.

[7]Nanya's *Bhāratabhāshya*, Ch. VII, Verse 7.

[8]His section on music, Ch. 16, *Vimshati* 4, of *Mānasollāsa*, is titled Gita Vinoda.

[9]Ibid., verses 559–560, p. 81, Vol. III of the G.O.S. edition of the *Mānasollāsa.*

[10]See footnote on p. 75 of the G.O.S. edition of *Sangita Chudāmani.*

[11]See *Sangita Ratnākara*, Ch. II, where such instructions are appended with every *rāga.*

[12]*Bhātkhande Smriti Grantha*, p. 439.

[13]*Sangita Darpana*, 2, 26.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

An Art-Historian on Rāgamālā Paintings: Music Transformed into Image

Geeti Sen

The *rāgamālās* belong to a distinctive category of miniature painting in India, permeated with a rich sensibility that is inspired by the elements – by the change of the seasons, the passing of day into evening into night, and the experiencing of different moods. These paintings grew in popularity along with the resurgence in medieval India of poetry, music and dance-drama. The three were intimately interlinked: poetry, music and painting. The *rāgamālās* are in many cases pictorial illustrations to the verses which invoke the mood of the *rāga*.

We may ask, how can there be established such an immediate connection between them? How can sound be translated into visual image?

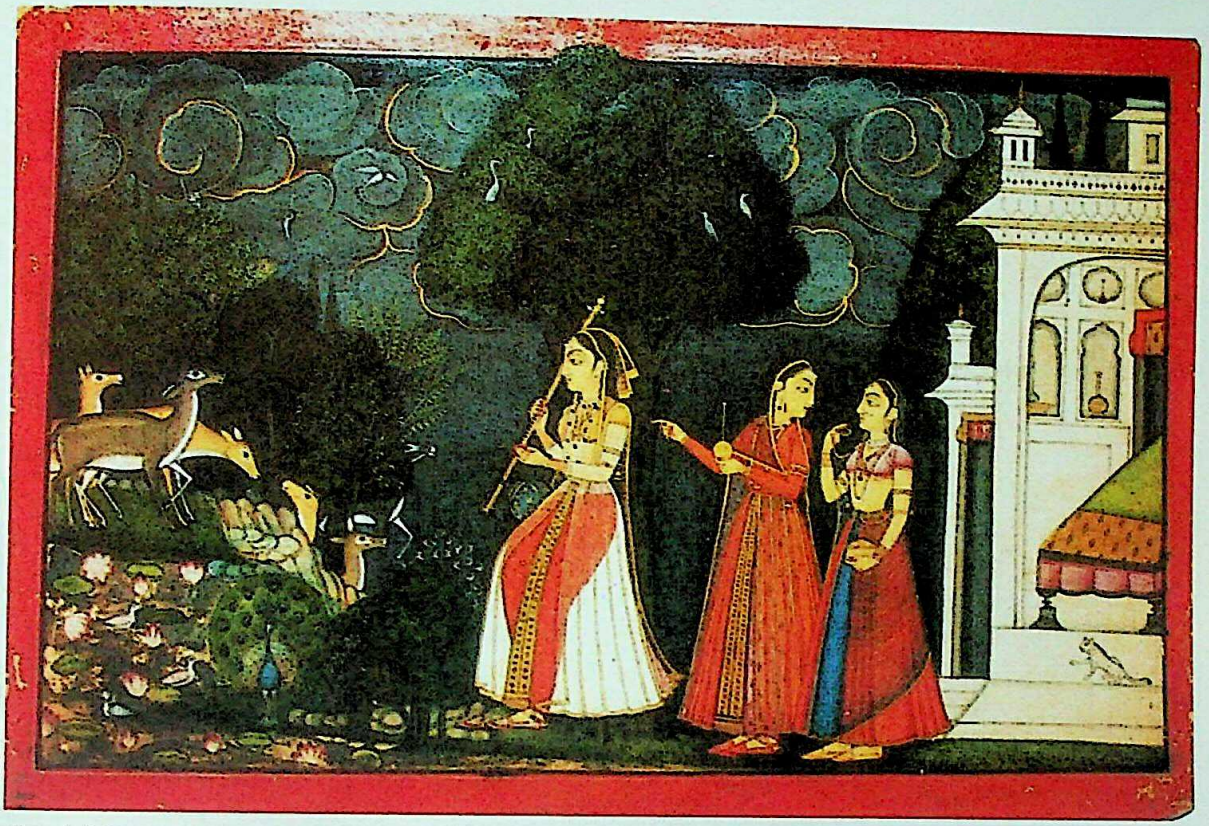
The relationship is not new. To cite just one instance, the Devanāgri script is a graphic abstraction of sound: each letter of the alphabet is conceived as a phonetic symbol. For the essential interrelation of the arts, we need only to turn to the celebrated begining of the *Vishnudharmottaram* which forms part of the ancient text of the *Vishnu Purāna*. The Raja who wished to learn the art of painting (*chitrakalā*), was informed that to understand painting, he must first learn to sculpt: to mould figures in plastic volume. To sculpt, however, to simulate movement and gesture, he must understand the principles of dance. And the rhythm of dance required a full appreciation of music: of percussion and then vocal music. And music of course has its natural inspiration from poetry. Thus he learnt that to be accomplished in one of the arts, he had to be informed and skilled in each of them.

As a concept, *rāga* lends credibility to the translation of sound into image. It is a difficult word to translate into any language. Derived from the Sanskrit root *ranja*, to colour, the word *rāga* literally means 'colouring'. With reference to music, it implies some means being used to 'colour' or influence the mind with a definite emotive response – to inflame it with a certain passion.

In music this response is achieved by the selection and sequence of musical notes: by a particular combination of the seven notes of the octave. This structure must consist of at least five notes, or it may be composed of all the seven notes. The essence of each individual *rāga*, distinguishing it from other *rāgas*, lies in the emphasis of a dominating note called the *vādi svara* and the avoidance of certain dissonant notes called *vivādi*. This combination of notes, it is believed, evokes within us patterns of joy, of sorrow, of love, of hope, of isolation, of anger, of penitence, of heroism. Through the play of *rāgas*, the entire range of human emotions may be experienced.

Since music is then coloured and tinged with specific emotive overtones, how

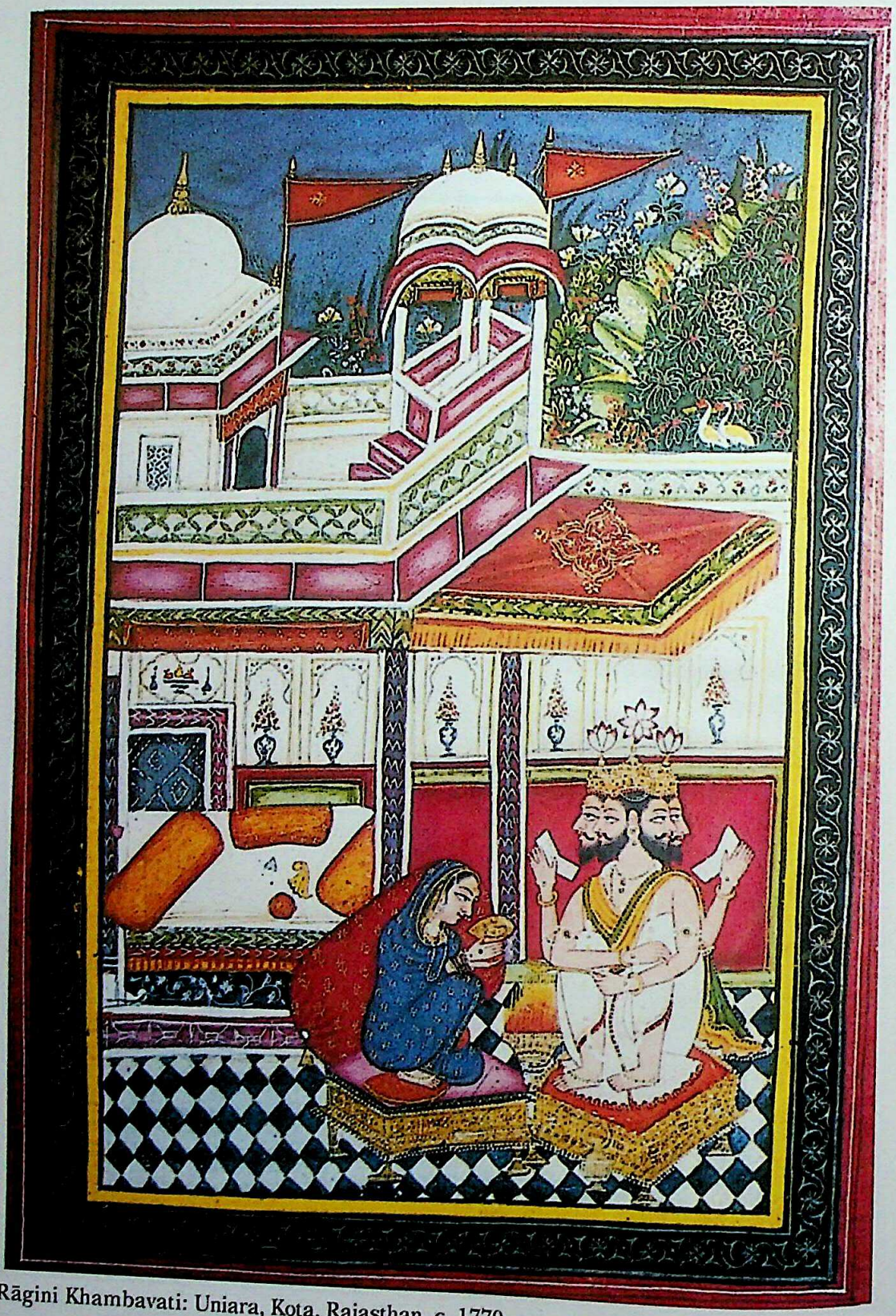
Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai



Rāgini Todi: Golconda, Deccan, c. 1730

Rāgamālā paintings reproduced by courtesy of National Museum, New Delhi.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai



Rāgini Khambavati: Uniara, Kota, Rajasthan, c. 1770.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

appropriate it seems to introduce colour and form and visual aids to enhance the expression of a mood, of a time of day, or of a season!

Indian music has created its own, specific mythology. The emotive genius of each *rāga* or *rāgini*, the dominant note, becomes its presiding deity, its *svaradevatā*. Given the Indian predilection for personification of rivers, of trees, of the sun and the Himālayas – it is not difficult to perceive how these modes of music came to be personified, or rather characterized, in pictorial images. The hero and heroine (*nāyaka, nāyikā*) appear in given situations, seasons, places – in a forest, before a shrine, besides a river, outside the bedchambers – to enact their part, as though in a dramatic situation that may well be observed on stage, to evoke within us the appropriate response to the music *as experienced through the painting.*

Certain *rāgas* are indisputably devotional in spirit, the music being a form of prayer. Among them is *Khambāvati rāgini*, supported with the painting of a lady on a white terrace in the act of worshipping lord Brahmā. The text informs us that:

> Desiring a boon, the woman offers up a coconut with folded hands.
> She makes offerings to Brahmā and gazes again and again on the image.

The colours in the painting are serene, the objects selective as though in still life, to focus our attention on the few offerings and the deity – so that the image becomes, in effect, a form of meditation.

Alternatively, the colours can be inflamed with pure passion, udiluted. In *rāgini Bhairavi*, the, brilliant red serves as the background to a captivating woman seated before the Shiva-linga, performing a *puja*. White flower garlands draped on the *lingam*, a triangular corner of the blue sky, the peacock on the roof, and the intensely black eyes and hair of the lady are the only accents here, in a Rājput painting of the 16th century. The use of bold primitive colours in these early works brings a savage intensity to miniatures of the early Bundi school. A remarkable affinity is shared between the lady profiled and the dark peacock above, as though they revel in the same ecstatic response to life.

These early paintings are permeated with a feeling which shocks almost as much as it startles the viewer. The atmosphere is one that is "not so much mystic as almost violently vital". The critic Hermann Goetz, writing about pictures of the Bundela school, expresses the thought so well:

> As in the poems, eroticism is not a medium of mysticism, but mysticism is the pretext and disguise of eroticism. It is the loftiness not of the ascetic but of the *kshatriya*.

Rāgamāla paintings seem indeed to have been the preserve and privilege of the Rājputs in north India. At the time of which we are speaking – the last quarter of the 16th century – the songs of Meerābāi were sung at the Rājput courts in a fervour of religious awakening. At Orcha, the *Rasikapriyā* of Keshava Dasa had just been composed in A.D. 1594, and was undoubtedly set to pictorial illustrations. In the early 17th century, the

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

hundred versus of the poet Amaru, the *Amaru Shataka*, was also set to pictures; so were poems of the Mālwā school in heightened exaltation of the heroine. Earlier precedents can be found for this genre, notably in the exquisite tradition of the *Ritusamhāra* of Kālidāsa, the *Gita Govinda* of Jaideva, and even the *dohās* of the *Vasanta Vilāsa*, the ode to spring. But now the classification of the *nāyikā*, in her different moods and situations, becomes the obsession in both poems as well as visual imagery.

Every detail, from the mention of sandal paste or musk or camphor, or ashes smeared on the body, to the leaves quivering with excitement and dewdrops glistening on the lotus, to the sound of parrots and the cacophony of monkeys in the forest, is used to arouse our sensibilities. It is the physical summoning that is vital here, which awakens us to sound and smell and colour, and which contributes to the essential vitality of these paintings. Some of them, at least those that are exquisitely finished, remain as images in the mind when the music has died away.

A young lissom woman, with a waist as slender as an hourglass, is depicted as wandering through the forest, followed by deer who seem infatuated with her. This is *rāgini Todi*, who embodies the anguish of the *vipralabdha nāyikā* separated from her lover. A verse inscribed above describes her condition:

> Divorced from her darling love,
> most unhappy in love,
> like a nun renouncing the world,
> this Todi abides in the grove
> and charms the heart of the does.

Or, the text might read:

> Her slim body as radiant as the frost,
> is smeared with the paste of saffron and camphor.
> She beguiles the deer in the woodlands
> carrying her *vinā*, such is Todikā.

A different mood is set by the *nāyikā* in *rāgini Gunkali*. The verses suggest once again her passionate association, indeed identification with nature:

> Blooming like a flower herself,
> she gathers blossoms with her heart full of gladness,
> for the coming of her lord Malkauns,
> she daily prepares the bed.

On the other hand, there is *rāgini Bangali*, who has retreated from the world altogether to assuage her ardour by becoming an ascetic, by focusing her mind and heart on Lord Shiva. A painting from the Bundi school adds to the poignancy by extolling the beauty of the wild landscape in which she finds herself. The verse is so graphic in its pictorial details of the environment that it leaves the viewer wondering which was conceived earlier—the poem or the painting!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

On a white temple, shining,
She sits on a rug of deerskin
she contemplates in her heart Lord Shiva.
Leaving the hermitage, she sits in the wilderness,
surrounded by trees of various forms
on which some monkeys gambol.
Clouds come thick and fast,
below the shrine of Shiva sits a lion,
beyond is a lake in which are lotuses,
and birds are frisking.
Bangali is a separated heroine
with her heart fixed on her Lord.

Quite a remarkable number of *rāginis* portray the *nāyikā* as practising *tāpas* to lead a remote and austere life. Understandably, among them is *rāgini Gāndhāri,* who in her devotion to Lord Shiva is:

with wasted frame in russet dwelling
in the forest by a lotus lake
supported by a *yogapatta,* firmly seated,
fair and pure, seated on a tiger skin.
Beside her *swami* she has become a *yogini*
and smears ashes on her body.
such is Gāndhāri....

A more unusual origin is found for *Asavari rāgini* or *rāgini Ahiri,* which suggests a derivation from the Ahir — cowherd nomads living in the hills. A legend in these hill parts tells us that Bāsu Nāga, the snake divinity, once abducted a certain woman. He set her free after telling her that she would give birth to eighteen *Nāgas* (snakes) whom she must keep in a pot and feed daily. According to Ananda Coomāraswāmy, this *rāgini* is obviously associated with the cult of the *Nāgas,* and perhaps had its origin among snake-charmers.

In a charming Bundi painting of the popular, folk style, *Asāvari* appears with the snake-charmer beside her playing upon the Shehnāi. Thus summoned, the cobras emerge from a basket to climb up to the rock where she is seated, isolated, garbed in a skirt of leaves. Her skin gleams dark blue, perhaps to suggest her origins. White cranes by the water listen, enchanted by the music, and the forest beyond is vibrant with the sound and colour of birds. In other paintings she herself plays upon a wind instrument, the *nāgasvara,* and the inscription reads:

Asāvari is longing for her husband
and climbs the Malaya mountains.
All the snakes desert their sandal trees
and writhe and coil their bodies.

We introduce these four *nāyikās* because the depiction of them is each so different—setting the tone on each occasion for a different mood of the *rāgini.* Yet with each of

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

them, our sensibilities are all awakened, through the considered use of colour, form, rhythm, and the composition of the painting. The starkness of white shrine, the angularity of the steps leading down to the water, and the emaciated heroine are in deliberate contrast with the lotuses in full bloom, the swirling waters, the monkeys astir in the trees, the calls of the white cranes resounding in the forest. In each of these images also, nature is discovered to be in total resonance with the mood of the *ṇāyikā*. In *Todi rāgini* the pair of does is as essential as the *nāyikā* to contribute to our unerstanding. All of nature, as it were, rejoices in music.

Rāga Dipaka was at one time considered to be one of the most popular *rāgas*. The text of the *Sangitamālā* gives us a most graphic description of this *rāga*, with essential guidelines for the artist:

Born from the eyes of the sun; by the effulgence of his complexion scolding the flower of the pomegranate; ravishingly graceful as he rides on a rutted elephant; accompanied by female elephants, carrying around his neck an incomparable necklace of pearls. The melody is centred on the note *śadja*, it is sung at noon-tide in summer season.

Rāga Dipaka was considered to be a fearful *rāga*, full of fire and intensity. An apocryphal story centres around the greatest of all musicians, Tānsen, who sang it to such perfection that the waters of the river Yamuna began to boil. At that point, as quoted by Dr Pratāpāditya Pāl, we are told a female singer of the Mughal court was called upon to sing the *Megha-Malhār (Khamāj thāt)* which brought down rain, thus averting the impending catastrophe.

Six important *rāgas* trace their inspiration to the different seasons of the year. Among the most familiar, *rāga Vasanta* is associated with spring, and more specifically with the festival of Holi and the sprinkling of colour and joy. The carnival of spring is suggested with new young shoots of mango blossom carried in a pot, with the swing festival, with Krishna and Rādhā. *Rāga Hindola* depicts the archetypal lovers seated on an ornate swing, with peacocks and *gopis* around them to add to the flamboyance. A Mālwā painting carries the inscription of a verse. As translated by O.C. Gangoly:

Who has made this masterpiece of beauty,
seated on the swing in a mood of passion,
as it rocks to and fro? The ladies are
swinging him, singing songs with gusto
and without reserve. Their shining complexions
enhanced by their yellow robes flash like lightning.
All the young damsels indulge in the sport,
carried away by hilarious mirth and passion.

A most exquisite rendering of this *rāga* is today in the National Museum, Delhi, and belongs to a remarkable set of *rāgamālās* from the Deccan. Completed in the late 16th century, these have been assigned by some scholars to Bijāpur. The lovers, suffused in saffron clothes, are seated on a swing decorated with tiny bejewelled blue flowers. The mango trees above them are shooting out white blossoms against a pale gold sky. Before

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

them stands an attendant with a Vinā and a bucket is placed with two spray guns for playing Holi. The verve and vibrancy of the painting results from colours and flowers that seem sprinkled, as it were, over the whole page.

Sometimes the verses suggest the candour and free spirit in which the poem was composed, allowing for the play of the creative imagination. Rangalāla, a poet in the service of the Mughal court, invented a 'happening' that captures the hilarity and mood of spring. Here is Gangoly's translation of the verse:

> The pillars are set with jewels and the strings are of
> red silk.
> The seal is of gold and is set with gems.
> [The hero] is swinging in intimate embrace with the
> beautiful damsel.
> They are cutting jokes with funny songs and amorous motive.
> As he swings and swings, he leans over and topples over
> on the ground,
> Hindola pretending to be giddy and to have overbalanced
> himself in fun,
> Two dear damsels ran to rescue him with exclamations
> of sympathy
> And embraced him, says Rangalāla,
> So that he rose with a smile, encouraged
> by the love of his beloved.

Another of the six is *rāga Megha* in celebration of the advent of the monsoons. The painting depicts the dance of the lovers to the accompaniment of drums (*dhol*) and tambourine, which are associated with thunder and which beckon the clouds. As put by a contemporary artist who let her imagination soar as a child: "When I listened to Bihāris playing their drums at night to bring down the rains, I used to believe that one day drums would tumble out of the sky. All the play of the elements is introduced: a shiver of white lightning, the dark thunder blue of the sky, and the white cranes depicted as flying up to the clouds to quench their thirst with the first drops. Below, peacocks are dancing with Shyām, the eternal Krishna, in a Mewār painting of A.D. 1628 ascribed to the artist Sā hibuddin.

It is of interest to note that some of the earliest *rāgamālā* paintings at the Rājput courts are by Muslim artists. Naris-ud-din is the sole artist of a bold and vibrant set painted at Chawand, the interim capital of Mewār state, in the year A.D. 1605. In A.D. 1628 another *rāgamālā* series at Mewār was commissioned from Sāhibuddin, who also later worked on a Rāmāyana series at Udaipur in A.D. 1649. More recently, the inscription on a *rāgamālā* set mentions the fact that it was commissioned at Chunār from three artists who had been trained at the Mughal court of the emperor Akbar. The rich sensibility that is born of the earth, that responds to the elements, did not reserve itself to the Hindu religion, or for that matter restrict itself merely to the court. Folk and popular versions of *rāgamālā* paintings do abound.

In the South one of the greatest patrons of music and of the arts was Ibrāhim Ādil Shāh of Bijāpur. His passion for music is proverbial, and is described by the poet Ẓuhuri

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

who took up residence at his court:

> In the art of painting he excels the painter ... while placing the looking glass before him he paints his own picture ... He is also an expert calligraphist ... Despite all these excellences ... he treats ... [them] as the effect and music as the cause ... the messengers ... roam about ... the world ... with [purses] ... round their waists ... in search of the skilled professionals...
> And in Nauraspur a building has been newly erected and furnished for the residence ... of the expert musicians ... and with the tumult ... of the players ... the trees have set up such a dance ... The world is saturated with melody.

His *Kitāb-i-Nauras,* a book of songs in Deccani Hindi, "contains numerous descriptions of *rāgas* and *rāginis,* with accounts of their moods, activities and attributes. Nine *rāgamālā* paintings have survived to the present day in this book. The more significant set of *rāgamālās* ascribed to his patronage has already been mentioned above with *rāga Hindola.* The remaining paintings and their provenance are discussed in great detail by Marc Zebrowski in his book on Deccani Painting.

Having suggested the fact that there is a given iconography to each *rāga* and *rāgini,* we must be cautioned with the fact that all paintings do not necessarily hold to one identical image. This has caused some problems in regard to identification when the name of the *rāga* or *rāgini* is not clearly inscribed above the painting. An obvious instance of discrepancies in painting is found with *rāga Bhairava,* the melody of early morning prayer. It is believed to be an autumn *rāga* which chases away the fever. Pictorial illustrations might be devotional, as with the worship of Shiva. In some paintings, however, *Bhairava* is portrayed as a lord, not as god incarnate or as an ascetic.

It is in the nature of creative expression that it plays with the given elements to construct an image that is fresh and vital. Classifications do not hold, constraints do not bind the artist. As much as the singer is given to improvise upon the essential notes of a *rāga,* as much as the poet Rangalāla found it delicious fun to invent a story on *rāga Hindola,* so the painter finds himself free to bring his own interpretation of *bhakti* to the painting. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Rabindrasangeet: Song Compositions of Rabindranath Tagore

Lokenath Bhattacharya

The first thing about the songs of Rabindranāth Tagore, commonly known to his countrymen as *Rabindrasangeet,* is their totally Indian character. The second, no less important, is their distinct individuality, so distinct as to make them easily distinguishable from any other songs of Indian, or even Bengali, variety.

More than 2000 songs – 2006 is the exact number – all written and set to music by him, fit for all conceivable occasions of life and suited to almost any state of mind, would, in themselves, have earned Rabindranath a place of glory. But viewed against the enormity and quality of his total output in this and several other directions, they, as reflections of an integrated personality, assume an awe-inspiring dimension. The fact is that music, like poetry, remained, from his earliest to his last attempts at self-expression, an essential and constant trait of his being, one going with the other in an interacting and intertwining manner.

Though more than four decades have passed since Tagore died in 1941, his songs are becoming more and more popular, even to the extent of gaining prominence over his poetry, not to speak of his creations in other fields. But even so, two contradictory reactions to his music continue to be heard. One is that of unqualified adoration, advocating that it represents the very best and most sublime of whatever the Bengali mind has so far produced in the musical field, and that the beauty it achieves by its free and uninhibited use of *rāgas* and *rāginis* of the traditional structure of what is known as Hindustāni classical music makes it more seductive than all the glories of purely classical compositions accumulated through centuries of exercise and realization. The other reaction, generally restricted to adherents of the classical tradition, is that the songs of Tagore are so lightweight and watery as not to be taken into serious consideration.

Both these view-points are erroneous, as it is not impossible for one steeped in classical music to be deeply moved by these songs. On the contrary, an intellectual appreciation of them often enhances when one has an understanding of the classical structure. But even there, the yardsticks of classical music are not to be applied here for a proper appreciation, where a harmonious combination of words and music, one inseparable from the other, plays the most important role.

It should be remembered that even in the matter of that intimate union of words and music, Tagore as a composer formed very much a part of the Indian tradition going back to several centuries. *Vāggeyakāraka,* the creator of words as well as music, for example, is the term used in Sanskrit to describe the highest in rank among song composers*. The

**Vāggeyakāraka* or *vāggeyakāra* is the term generally used when referring to great composers like Syāma Sāstri, Thyāgarāja and Dikshitar to this day—Ed.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

sant-kavis, the mystics, proponents of the *bhakti* cult all over India enriched the heritage of the medieval period by their contributions to the *vāggeyakāraka* tradition. In particular, Tagore, specially in his mature years as composer, drew inspiration from the intrinsic bond of words and melody which, in spite of many vicissitudes of time, he found still very much alive in several kinds of folk songs of Bengal.

If music played such a significant role in his creativity, it was due to the fact that he was born into a family where music was a part of everyday life. This enabled him to absorb right from childhood the traditions and conventions of classical music, though, essentially the creator that he was, he never bothered to learn them in a systematic manner. It was never his intention to model himself in the image of a professional singer, an ustād which, had he desired so, he could have certainly become. Whatever he learnt or observed or assimilated was ultimately applied to the creative purposes of song-making and composing. But that early grounding in classical music was important, shaping his musical nature and forming the basis of his musical appreciation. The standard structure he adopted for most of his songs – with four clear-cut divisions of *sthāyi, antarā, sanchāri* and *ābhoga* – shows his knowledge, gained through long and patient practice, of the rules of prosody governing the composition of the ancient songs of his country which, in later years, he could so easily apply even to his *baul* or *kirtan* types of songs, or to those where he came out in his most characteristic form, providing an aesthetic experience of the kind not to be found anywhere else.

In his use of *tālas* also, the same mastery of classical music is clearly discernible. There is hardly a single *tāla* commonly found in the entire body of Hindustāni classical music, in such diverse forms as *dhrupada, khayāl, thumri* or *tappā,* which he has not used to advantage and with perfect understanding. To this amazing array of *tālas* he has also added a few of his own creations, such as, most notably, *navatāla* of nine beats (3+2+2+2), *jhampak* of five beats (3+2), which some have tried to wrongly interpret as a variation of *jhaptāla, rupakrā* of eight beats (3+2+3), *shashthi* of six beats (2+4) and *ekādashi* of eleven beats (3+2+2+4). Not exercises in gimmickry and possessing an organic unity, they are significant contributions to Indian music.

Similarly impressive is the number of *rāgas* and *rāginis* he has used, though, among them, he seemed to have a special liking for some in particular, such as *Behāg, Bhairavi, Chhāyānat, Pilu, Bahār, Paraj, Desh, Puravi, Kedāra, Kāfi* and *Malhār.* In his compositions he had also a penchant for the stark austerity of the *dhrupada,* rather than the ornate *khayāl;* for the emotional compactness of the *tappā* rather than the sensuous sweetness of the *thumri.* The *dhrupada* had a marked influence on him, which is clearly visible in his early compositions.

While he used a particular *rāga,* he also generally paid attention to the emotional qualities ascribed to it by Indian musical theory. Quite a few examples can be cited from among his earlier compositions, where strict adherence to traditional patterns of development in particular *rāgas* can be clearly seen. Most such songs are devotional in nature and were composed in his formative period when such classical music as he used to hear in his surroundings exerted a strong influence on him. A good number of such songs are often faithful renderings in Bengali – if not text-wise, at least tune-wise – of

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

songs collected from other Indian languages. But as he progressed, such faithfulness to dictates of musical theory disappeared, with the result that at times in a given song a trained and analytical ear can discover traces of several *rāgas* existing harmoniously. What matters in such songs is not the predominance of words over melody, or of melody over words, but the blending of the two in such a fashion that both lose their separate identities to become one single entity.

This perfect blending, which characterizes the best of his music and gives it its unique distinction, is at times so overpowering that even in the case of a song where only one particular *rāga* has been systematically used, while listening to it, one, without ever thinking of the *rāga* in which the words have been clothed, would be swept away by the totally new experience that is offered. One such example among hundreds is the song *Tomār ei mādhuri chhāpiye ākāsh jhorbe,* based on the *rāga Behāg.* But it is not *Behāg* which is important here; it is *Rabindrasangeet* in all its glory and nothing else.

Thematically, Tagore himself had divided his songs into the following categories: devotional, patriotic, love, nature, miscellaneous, those to be sung on particular occasions, those belonging to his dance-dramas, and those he had included in some of his plays to be rendered as part of the dramatic representation. To these are to be added his early *padāvalis* imitating the language and content of *vaishnava* lyrics in the manner of earlier poets in Brajabhāshā and signed Bhanusimha — a synonym for Ravi, his own first name, meaning the sun. Songs pertaining to the category of nature are seasonal, with a great many of them on the rainy season alone, while those meant for particular occasions are songs to be rendered during festivals like, for example, the tree-planting ceremony. It should also be mentioned that the border-line between devotional and love songs composed by him is at times arbitrarily drawn as what he meant by love or devotion, specially the way in which he expressed these feelings, often amounted to the same thing.

As for the musical aspects of the songs, four phases, broadly and chronologically, can be differentiated. The songs composed in the first phase show a clear influence of Hindustāni classical music, mainly of the *dhrupada* variety. In the second phase experiments started with the traditional structure of classical music, at times deviating a little from it, at other times adding new embellishments to the structure, but without disturbing or violating the essential skeleton. The third phase saw the introduction of folk elements such as *bhātiāli, bāul, kirtan,* etc. and an occasional mixing of these forms with the traditional pattern. In the fourth and last phase he became totally himself, discarding past conventions and stressing the importance of the bond betweeen words and music. He himself had once described his compositions of this last phase as "totally aesthetic".

This blending of words and music pertaining of the much earlier Indian tradition of *vāggeyakāraka* was no longer a prominent feature of vocal music at the time of his birth. The musical influence of the Arabic-Persian world which started asserting itself on north Indian traditions from the end of the 15th century onwards introduced a purely mechanical and florid style in which less and less attention was paid to the meaning of the text sung, with the result that what principally mattered was the virtuosity of the

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

singer in exploring the endless possibilities of melodic and rhythmic flourishes.

In Tagore's music there is a return to meaning and to the importance of words, and what he could do in this direction is of supreme quality, due particularly to the quality of his words. However, in this task he was greatly aided by the remnants of the folk traditions of his people, whose simpler lines and direct appeal of melodies moved him deeply.

Earlier in his musical career some forms of Western music – specially a few Scots, Irish and old English tunes which he had learnt in his student days in England – appear to have influenced his work to a certain extent. It is thus that the robbers in his *Vālmiki-Pratibhā* are at sudden intervals found to break out into well-known Scots and English tunes, although, there again, a distinct Indianization of the melodies is never absent. In such early attempts, as in those of his later years, his personality never failed to penetrate into the melodies, impregnating them with a flavour so characteristically his, and not only his but also of the larger Indian tradition of which he remained to his very last days so integral a part.

Arnold Adriaan Bake in an article has shown how this magic worked in him by reproducing, in staff notation, the melody of the original English song 'Drink to me only with thine eyes' and that of the Bengali composition Tagore based on it, *Katabār bhebechhinu āpana bhuliyā.*

Western harmonic compositions, it must be admitted, remained strange to Tagore and, as a composer, any suggestions of being bound to one particular key and on journeying from one key to another along permissible harmonic lines as in the case of Western classical music were always repellent to him. This explains his indifference to some Western composers who came to play to him their compositions on his texts.

Tagore did, it is true, make some occasional harmonic experiments of a very minor nature as in songs like *Āmi chini go chini tomāre ogo bideshīni* or *Nil nave ghane āshārha gagane* or in the Vedic hymn *Samgachhadhvam samvadadhvam* which he set to music. But they remained for him nothing more than an occasional intellectual pastime in which he but rarely indulged. What is to be noted is that even in these cases the original tune of a particular line and its harmonic development never departed from the same modal structure.

However, there is one particular influence of Western music which he seems to have readily accepted. He remains the first Indian composer to consider his songs as inviolable entities, which is a departure from the general Indian attitude towards song compositions of this nature.

In any discussion of his songs what is of paramount importance is not to forget that they cannot be examined in isolation and have to be viewed against the totality of his life and creations in other spheres, all of which were marked by a unity characteristic of a complete artist of the kind he was. The perfect blend of words and music which characterizes his songs makes their rendering unbearable if a singer has failed to acquire the style or has not understood the relationship between his words and music, the two fundamental components becoming one entity in his compositions.

It would indeed be irrelevant to ask whether his songs could achieve what purely

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

classical music can. They are not the same thing, nor are their respective objects the same. But in their own ways both are capable of producing an experience of the infinite in a listener or singer. □

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

INDEX

Abdul Karim Khan: 89, 92.
Abdul Wahid Khan: 92.
Abhinavagupta: 115.
Agra *gharānā*: 87, 106, 107, 109.
Ain-i-Akbari: 84
Allādiyā *gharānā*: 106, 108.
Ali Akbar Khan: 1.
Amir Khan: 92, 108, 110.
Amjad Ali Khan: 87.
Ānanda Coomāraswamy: 6, 102, 103.
Andolan: 21, 22.
Asgari Bai: 78.
Atrauli *gharānā*: 87.

Bade Ghulam Ali Khan: 87, 92, 108.
Badi Moti Bai: 94.
Baij Nath: 100.
Banaras *anga thumri*: 93.
Bandish: 97, 99.
Barkat Ali Khan: 89.
Begum Akhtar: 92, 93, 94.
Bharata: 9, 10, 13, 92, 115.
Bharatabhāshya: 115.
Bhavabhatta: 78.
Bimal Mukherji: 87.
Bindadin Maharaj: 90.
Bol banāo ki thumri: 90, 91, 92.
Bol bānth ki thumri: 90, 91, 92.

Chaturdandi Prakashika: 5.

Devendra Murdheshwar: 27.
Dikshitar: 12, 96, 100, 106.
Dhrupada: 75, 76, 79, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 105, 107, 108, 109.
Dhun: 100.

Ethnomusicology: 1, 3.

Faiyyaz Khan: 89, 107, 109, 110.
Feroze Khan Adārang: 80, 84, 85.
Fox Strangways: 114.

Gamak: 21, 27.
Gandhi: 4.
Gangubai Hangal: 15.
Ganpat Rao: 94.
Gharānā: 87, 105, 110, 111.
Gita Govinda: 76, 121.
G.N. Natu: 85.
Gopala Krishna Bharathi: 28.
Govindāchārya: 12.
Guru: 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 110.
Gurukula system: 6.
Guru-shishya parampara: 89, 94, 102, 103, 106.
Gwalior *gharānā*: 106, 107, 108, 110.

Hafiz Ali Khan: 81.
Harikambodi scale: 10.
Harmony: 18.
Hazrat Amir Khusrau: 83, 84.
Hazrat Khwaza-e-Khazgan: 87.
Hirabai Barodekar: 108, 109.

Indian Musical Traditions: 105.

Jagadekamalla: 116.
Jaideva: 76, 121.

Kadar Piya: 90, 92.
Kakinada Krishna Iyer: 12.
Kalidasa: 2, 121.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Khayal: 79, 80, 81, 83-88, 105, 107, 109.
Khayāl exponents: 85.
Kirānā gharānā: 106, 108, 109
K.P. Mukherji: 109.

Lalan Piya: 90, 92.

Maharana Kumbha: 76.
Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer: 12.
Mahendra Varman: 11.
Manasollasa: 116.
Manakuthuhala: 77.
Manambuchavadi Venkatasubbiah: 12.
Matanga: 5, 9, 13, 115.
Meerabai: 120.
Mela Raga Malika: 12.
Melody: 6.
Moizuddin Khan: 93.
M.S. Gopala Krishnan: 87.
Muhammad Shah Rangile: 80, 84, 95.
Musicians of Agra *gharānā*: 107.
Musicisians of Allādiya *gharānā*: 108.
Musicians of Gwalior *gharānā*: 107.
Musicians of Kirānā *gharānā*: 108.
Musicians of Patiala *gharānā*: 108.
Musicians of Rampur *gharānā*: 107.
Muthiah Bhagavathar: 12.
Nanyabhupala: 115.
Nanyadeva: 116.
Naris-ud-din: 124.
National Centre for the Performing Arts: 110.
Natyashastra: 5, 9, 13, 90, 92.
Nayaka Baiju: 76, 78.
Nayaka Gopala: 76, 78.
Nazir Jairazbhoy: 15.
Niyamat Khan Sadārang: 80, 84, 85.

O.C. Gangoly: 15, 123, 124.
Omkarnath Thakur: 107, 109, 110.

Pan: 10.
Pannalal Ghosh: 15.
Parsvadeva: 116.
Patiala *gharānā*: 106, 108.
Prabandha: 75, 76.
Purandaradasa: 11.

Rabindranath Tagore: 126, 128.
Rāga: 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13-17, 18-20.
Raga Darpana: 76.
Rāgamālā: 119, 120, 123, 124, 125.
Ragas of Northern Indian Music: 15.
Raga Vibodha: 11.
Raja Man Singh Tomar: 76, 77, 80.
Rāmāmātya: 5, 11.
Rāmāyana: 124.
Rampur *gharānā*: 106, 107.
Rasa: 4, 90.
Ravi Shankar: 1.

Sahaswan *gharānā*: 106, 107.
Sanat Piya: 90.
Sangita Chudamani: 116.
Sangita Darpana: 117.
Sangita Pārijata: 13.
Sangita Rāja: 76.
Sangita Ratnākara: 5, 11, 13, 76, 83, 116.
Sangita Research Academy: 110.

Sangitasamaya Sāra: 116.
Sangita Sāra: 11.
Sangita Sārāmritha: 12.
Sangraha Choodāmani: 12.
S.C. Chakravarty: 87.
Senia *gharānā*: 106, 107.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Shambhu Maharaj: 94.
Shankaracharya: 103.
Sharangadeva: 5, 11, 83, 116, 117.
Shorie Miyan: 93.
Shruti: 15, 17.
Shyama Sastry: 15, 96, 126.
Silappadikaram: 10.
Someshvara: 116.
Sultan Hussain Shirki: 14, 80.
Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah: 124.
Svaramelakalānidhi: 5, 11, 13, 114.
Swami Haridasa: 78.
Swati Thirunal: 12.

Tāla: 18, 19, 22, 23, 127.
Tānsen: 78, 84, 100, 123.
Tānsen *gharānā*: 106, 107.
Tappā: 92, 93.
Thakur Jaidev Singh: 83.
The Music of Hindustan: 114.
Thulaja: 12.
Thumri: 89–94.
Thyagaraja: 12, 15, 96, 100, 126.
Tohfat-ul-Hind: 76, 77.
Tolkappiam: 9.

Upaj: 98, 99.
Usulun-Naghmat-e-Asifi: 77.

Vadi: 49, 51.
Vāggeyakār: 96, 99, 126, 128.
Veda Parayana: 103.
Venkatamakhi: 5, 11, 12, 16, 99.
Venkatamakhi Muthu: 12.
V.G. Jog: 87.
Vidyāranya: 11.
Vilayat Khan: 15, 87.
Vinayakrao Patwardhan: 107, 109.
Vishnu Digambar Paluskar: 16, 107, 109.
Vishnu Purana: 103.
V.N. Bhātkhande: 15, 16, 19, 27, 81, 85, 86, 96, 112, 114, 117.

Walter Kauffman: 15.
Women thumri singers: 92.

Zamzamā: 22.
Zebrunnisa Begum: 94.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Prof. Sumati Mutatkar, the editor of the book, learnt Hindustani classical music from notable vocalists of the Agra, Gwalior and Rampur *gharanas*. She did her doctoral thesis in music under the supervision of Pandit S.N. Ratanjankar, from whom she also received training in vocal music. She worked in All India Radio from 1953 to 1968, and was Dean of the Faculty of Music and Fine Arts, Delhi University, from 1970 to 1981. She has written and spoken extensively on Indian Music. For her service to music, she was honoured with the Fellowship of Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1979.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Other latest titles

SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI

Contemporary Indian Theatre
Edited by Rajinder Paul

Rabindranath Tagore: A Tribute
Edited by Pulinbihari Sen, Kshitis Roy

Swinging Syllables: Aesthetics of Kathak Dance
By Sushil Kumar Saxena

Tolpava Koothu: Shadow Puppets of Kerala
By G. Venu

HOPE INDIA

Commingling of Two Oceans: *Majma-ul-Bahrain*
By Prince Muhammad Dara Shikoh
Eng. tr. by Prof. M. Mahfuz-ul-Haq

They too Fought for India's Freedom: The Role of Minorities
Edited by Asghar Ali Engineer

Towards a Natural World: The Rights of Nature, Animal Citizens and other Essays
By Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer

India Divided 1947
Edited by K.C.Yadav

Bhagat Singh: Ideas on Freedom, Liberty and Revolution: Jail Notes of a Revolutionary(Facsimile Copy)
Edited by K.C.Yadav, Babar Singh

SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI

HOPE INDIA PUBLICATIONS

ISBN 81-7871-096-X

9 788178 710969

Rs. 595.00